The Cradle of the Deep

An account of the Adventures of Eleven Children and Their Shipmates

JACOB FISHER

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THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP

"SEEING NO MOTION IN THE MAN'S BODY, HE . . . TURNED IT OVER WITH A JERK" (*see page* 150)

THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP

An Account of the Adventures of Eleanor Channing and John Starbuck

BY

JACOB FISHER

With a frontispiece in full color from a painting by MODEST STEIN

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THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP

CHAPTER I

THE WRECK

"HERE, — damn you, get back!"

The spat of a bare fist on soft flesh accompanied the oath and was followed by the thud of a man's body striking the deck.

"This ain't the *Bourgogne,* you frog-eater. Women go first on this ship, savvy that?"

The second officer of the South Pacific liner *Marquesas,* San Francisco for Manila, leaned for an instant to gaze into the face of the man he had struck, but, before he had time to satisfy himself as to the extent of the damage done, another dull roar shook the ship and the deck heaved sickeningly as the whole fabric of the steamer shuddered under her death blow.

The second shock was not so heavy as the first, which had come without warning some few minutes before, when, for some reason probably never to be explained, the dynamite stored under the cargo in the forward hold had awakened the slumbering passengers with its sullen detonation. The force of the explosion apparently had torn the bottom out of her, and, though the discipline that made possible the shutting of the few compartment doors she possessed was admirable, the *Marquesas* was already several feet down by the head when the second shock burst the forward bulkhead and sent the water pouring into her fire-room.

To add to the predicament, the disaster came in the dark of a moonless, starless night. The flash of rockets and the glare of the Coston signals burning on the superstructure illumined the sea round about, but with the dynamo stilled and the ship's lights out, the decks below were too dark to distinguish more than the hurrying to and fro of vague shapes, as the remnants of the crew stood to stations and the officers here and there tried to quiet the frightened passengers. The order, " Stand by to abandon ship," had been given, pending an examination as to the extent of the steamer's wounds, but now it was evident that she was doomed and that no time was to be lost in getting out of her.

Worn out as they were by a four days' northeast

gale into which the ship had run some days after leaving Honolulu, during which the starboard propeller had raced itself off the tailshaft and one blade of the remaining screw had dropped into two thousand fathoms of water, the passengers as well as the crew were too fatigued both in body and mind to feel to its full extent the portent of this new disaster. Officers, who had hardly left the bridge during the gale, were being wearily kept on duty by the fact that the nearly unmanageable steamer had been blown far to the southward of her course, and by dead reckoning and such observations as they were able to make, was in dangerous proximity to the reefs and countless islands that dot the Pacific in the region north of the equator and to the west of the one hundred and eightieth meridian.

The full force of the first explosion, coming directly under the forecastle where most of the men except the deck watch and the engine-room force were sleeping, had killed or maimed the greater number, so that in the stress that followed, work with the boats was slow and all were undermanned though they bid fair to be filled to overburden with the passengers, of which the ship had nearly a full list. Curiously enough, with the second detonation, which increased the peril many fold, the screaming and hubbub on deck lessened, and, save for the sobbing cry of a woman here and there,

order was fairly restored. Sharp and decisive now came the orders of the captain from the superstructure of the deckhouse aft, where he had taken his station since the bridge had been wrecked by the first blast.

"First officer's boat."

"Ready, sir."

"Lower away."

And the craft, crowded with huddled humanity, sank from the davits to the washing sea alongside. Safely launched, the boat pulled away from the ship and lay at a little distance, the crew resting on their oars.

"Second officer!"

Again came the high note from above and the crispness and businesslike cadence of its tone in itself inspired confidence in the throng of men and women who were awaiting their turn. But the second officer did not answer.

"Mr. Steinway," called the captain to the third officer, who stood near the rail working over a jammed fall with bleeding fingers, "where is Mr. Starbuck?"

"Haven't seen him since the last blow up, sir."

"Then take charge of his boat," continued the captain as he peered through the darkness. "All clear there?" he questioned as the third officer finally jerked the rope free. "Then stand by to

lower. Lower away," he added as the last man took his place, followed by Mr. Steinway in the stern-sheets.

The other boats followed, one by one, until six were in the water. All these were loaded deep with passengers and such of the wounded members of the watch below as had been got out of the wreck before the second explosion made further rescue impossible. The four boats that lay at the forward davits had been so badly damaged as to be useless, but by close packing the others were made to hold the ship's company without resorting to the use of the life-rafts. Though several were overcrowded they were seaworthy enough in quiet weather and the chance that they would be lightened through the death of several of the injured men seemed almost certain. The boats in charge of the first and third officers, the chief engineer, first assistant, steward and purser all having gone, the captain looked about him.

"Are all out of the ship?" he bellowed to the chief, whose boat lay nearest.

"I think so," came back the answer.

"Have you seen Mr. Starbuck?"

"No, sir, not since the second explosion. He must have gone below for something and got caught."

"Stagg," called the captain to the boatswain's

mate, who stood by the after gangway rail, "go below and see if you can find the second officer."

The man started on his mission while the captain stood waiting, viewing for the last time the wreck of his command. No sound came save the gurgle of the water pouring through the rent forward bulkhead. The scream of exhausting steam from the open escape valve had stopped and no more than a murmur of voices rose from the nearby boats. The people in the captain's boat sat silent, benumbed with the suddenness of disaster, waiting for whatever else should come to them. The deck sagged and rose, heavy and lifeless, and now and then the ship tossed her stern high as the sea-filled fore part settled lower.

"Can't find him, sir," came the hurried voice of the boatswain's mate, as he appeared with a lighted engine-room torch dropped by a fleeing oiler. "I've looked everywhere for him," he added. "She won't swim much longer, sir; the 'midship bulkhead is goin' soon."

"Take your place then and stand by," was the captain's order as he made his way to the boat deck.

A last glance forward, where the water was already washing over the deck with the sluggish movement of the ship, and the captain climbed over the boat's gunwale.

"Lower away," he ordered.

A moment before the second explosion the second officer, Mr. Starbuck, was leaning over the man he had knocked down. As he bent forward there came to his ears a low cry, a woman's voice, with grief and despair in its muffled note, from somewhere below him. An open port might have carried the sound. Starbuck started as the roar of the detonation shook the steamer and leaving the Frenchman in the shadow where he lay, stepped across to where the doorway of the forward companion gaped black against the surrounding paintwork. Feeling in his pocket for matches, he groped his way to the stairs and stopped to listen. A faint sound caught his ear and he descended quickly and listened again. For a moment he heard nothing but the swash of the flooded hold and the clatter of the loose wreckage and floating cases among the cargo. Then he caught the sound again, unmistakable this time, as that of a human voice which led him quickly to the port side, forward, where the gangway past the stateroom doors ended in a jumbled mass of debris. Hurrying on, he could hear some one struggling weakly with breath coming in laboured gasps. Bending low, with a lighted vesta he explored a gaping hole in the side of a stateroom and caught a glimpse of a foot, a woman's, in motion, twisting and turning in an effort to free itself from some obstruction. With a shout of encouragement Star-

buck tried the stateroom door but it was jammed immovable. With fierce blows of his feet and fists he attacked the panels of the side, the lower of which, already splintered, came easily away, leaving a hole large enough to admit his head and shoulders. Squirming through the narrow space, he lighted another match and saw, lying on the deck, a young woman, held down by a broken beam which lay across her legs. He pulled himself quickly inside, and, as he did so, the feeble struggling ceased.

"Fainted," he thought, as he peered at her. "That couldn't have killed her."

Stooping, he braced himself for an effort and with all the strength in his body pitted his weight against that of the fallen beam. At first it would not give. Angered by this, Starbuck suddenly increased his effort and, with a heave, wrenched the timber upward. It came a few inches only, but it was enough, and grasping the woman by the shoulders he drew her from underneath. He could not see her features and lighted another match, looking about meanwhile for water. There was a carafe in the rack above the wash-bowl. He seized it and poured the water liberally over her face as she lay with her head on his knee. With the shock she opened her eyes, and as the circumstances came dimly back she stared at him in fright.

"Are you much hurt? Can you get up?" asked Starbuck, as he raised her to a sitting posture. "You will have to hurry. The ship is sinking fast."

She made an effort to rise but fell back with a cry of pain.

"Is your leg broken?" he asked, and receiving no reply stooped to examine. "Move your legs, if you can, and let me see," he ordered sharply.

He struck a match and held it up. The woman started and rose to her knees, looking at him with staring eyes.

"Good," he said, "you can walk well enough. You're Miss Channing. We'll have to be getting out of here in a hurry. Grab what you can lay your hands on and follow me through."

He made as if to raise her, and at last she spoke.

"My aunt," she faltered, "there, in the berth — I came to find her. I couldn't see and she — I'm afraid — "

Quickly he made a light, and for the first time saw the form of a woman in the berth, lying huddled as if in pain. As he looked closer he discerned a long sliver of wood from the splintered partition protruding from her breast and a heavier fragment wedged across her throat. A glance was enough, but to make sure he placed his hand on her heart.

"She's dead," he said. "Come."

Seeing that the girl stood in a daze he seized her roughly by the shoulder and shook her, exclaiming as he felt the ship lurch drunkenly under his feet:

"You've got to come quick or we'll be caught. She's going down any moment."

In the darkness he felt for the hole with one hand, and holding the girl with the other, squeezed himself through, pulling her after him. Outside, with his arm around her he groped to the stairway and up it to the deck. Bearing her, he swiftly made his way aft, shouting as he ran in a voice that rose to a bellow when he realized there was no answering hail. Dropping her against the rail, he sprang up a ladder to the top of the deck-house. It was dark; the ship was deserted.

He sought for a Coston light in the after signal locker but it was empty, the captain having taken the last of the rockets and torches when he left the ship. He could see the shadows of the life-rafts and of the forward boats still hanging at the davits but the latter he knew to be useless and the former no one man could handle. Back he dropped to the promenade deck and ran to the girl, who clung silently to the rail. Grasping her arm he hurried aft, and saw, swinging from its tackles, the small work boat, made ready for launching but left still above the deck. Leaping in he made sure it con-

tained a full water breaker and the small tin case of biscuit always kept there. Oars, sail and mast, boathook and oarlocks were in their places. He hurried again to the girl.

"We're all right," he shouted. "We've got a chance."

The sucking sound from below warned him to hurry, and dragging her to the boat's side, he helped her in and told her to sit still. Diving into the nearest stateroom, one of the cabins of the upper tier, he was seizing the bedding when he felt something round. It was a bottle. Without stopping to learn the contents he dropped it into the pocket of his coat and made for the deck again. As he turned toward the boat his foot struck something soft, and bending down he felt the moustache and imperial of the Frenchman. The head moved. A groan of awakening consciousness and the man stirred and raised himself.

"Get up, if you want your life saved," rasped the second officer, as he grasped the fallen man's collar with his free hand. "It's lucky for you I thought of getting this stuff. Get along there."

He hauled, pushed and kicked the half conscious man into the boat, shoved the bow fall rope into his hands and hurriedly gave directions for lowering that a landsman might understand. He himself manned the stern tackle and at a word the boat

slowly dropped down the ship's lessening freeboard.

The sea was not rough and there was no difficulty in launching the light craft. When she was in the water the blocks were unhooked, and seating himself at the oars, with the girl in the stern and the man in the bow, Starbuck pulled rapidly from the steamer's side.

Black and monstrous lay the rolling bulk, dipping farther down with each slow, lifeless heave, the water frothing about her bows as she rose and sank in the trough of the sea. They had not gone more than a hundred yards when a muffled crash told the second officer that the midship bulkhead had burst. With a giant effort the ship threw her stern high in the air, then lurched and settled, heaved again and was gone for ever in the black depths. The sucking whirlpool and the tossing flotsam alone were left in the ghostly glow of the sea's phosphorescence.

As they watched, even this faint gleam disappeared, leaving them in their frail boat, alone with the sea, rising and falling on its bosom, overwhelmed by its mystery, its treachery and its utter loneliness.

It was very dark.

CHAPTER II

ON THE BREAST OF THE WATERS

STARBUCK, at the oars, for a time sat silent. He mechanically kept the boat's head to the seas, which now and then lifted bubbling crests, throwing the spume over the bow as the craft danced on the rhythmic heave. The Frenchman, too far overcome by the situation for words, cowered where he had dropped down with his head on the forward thwart. In the stern the girl sat, rigid and terrified, with a hand convulsively clutching at either gunwale.

Starbuck was listening. The other boats, he knew, would lay a course to the north in an attempt to reach the steamer lane between Honolulu and Manila, from which the *Marquesas* had been driven by the storm, and with straining ears he tried to catch any noise of oars or voices that might be borne to him on the breeze, but the only sound was that of the wind itself and the tireless wash of the sea. Standing erect he made a trumpet with his hands and bellowed into the wind's eye, but only

once or twice for he knew it was useless. The steamer's lifeboats, manned with husky rowers, loaded down though they were, could far outstrip his single-handed efforts; but he must make an attempt, he knew, to gain their company at once or the chase would be hopeless. Catching a sound from the man in the bow he turned on him savagely.

"Here, you," he shouted, "get up on that thwart and take an oar. You'll have to work your passage from this out."

As he spoke he reached for the man's collar and hoisted him from the bottom of the boat, shaking him into partial activity as he thrust an oar into his hands.

"Now you keep stroke with me, and row. Savvy?" he growled over his shoulder as he seated himself at his task.

The Frenchman made a poor oar of it, though roused by the apparent necessity of obedience he tried to do his best; but his unskilled strength was far below that of the other and the boat's head constantly swung off. The sailor looked around in disgust.

"You're a pretty apology for a man, now, ain't you?" he sneered. "Why, a wooden Injun could keep his end up better than that."

He took possession of the oar again and for the

first time seemed to turn his attention to the woman in the stern.

"Miss, do you think you could steer?" he asked.

She started at his sudden question. "I have steered boats in quiet water," she answered, "but perhaps that is very different. At any rate, I could try."

"That's proper talk," was the approving answer. "It'll give you something to think about anyway."

Bending over the stern to ship the rudder he discovered, though the weather was warm, that she was shivering.

"Cold?" he inquired.

And, in spite of her protest that it was nervousness and excitement, he gathered up the bedding he had taken from the steamer and wrapped it clumsily about her.

"Now," he continued, "keep the wind square in your face. I can't tell one point of the compass from another, but the wind ought to be about no'theast, so we'll head that way till morning and then we'll maybe sight the other boats. The compass of this dinghy is gone," he explained, as he settled himself at the oars again. "And you," he went on, with his head half turned to get an eye on the Frenchman, "if you can't do any better, lie still and trim the boat. You'll need your rest, too, because you don't want to think your bein' a land

lubber is going to let you sodjer out of work aboard of this one."

With that he commenced to pull in short, regular strokes with a seemingly tireless jerk of his arms and the boat began to move, slowly, almost imperceptibly among the heaving masses of black water, but the momentary whirls of phosphorescence left by the oar blades showed progress as they slid astern, as did the faint streak of light in the boat's wake. The steady click, clack of the oars in the rowlocks, the regular dip and rise of the boat as it crossed the long, slow swells, were calming in their influence, and gradually, as the girl's nervous tension relaxed, she found herself going back over the events that had so shaped themselves as to place her in such desperate straits.

Miss Eleanor Channing, only daughter of Major Horace Channing, U. S. A., born and bred inside the charmed circle of Boston's best culture, sat in a cockle-shell of a ship's dinghy, in mid-Pacific, with two strange men, to neither of whom had she ever spoken a word before that night, and of whose very existence she had been only dimly aware.

On her way to Manila, where her father was stationed for three years, with her aunt as chaperone, she had all in an instant been cut off from relatives, friends, and even the encircling arms of civilization itself, and dropped, as it were, into an emotional

and physical chaos that she could hardly grasp, so completely overturned was her mental and material world. At first she had hardly realized, but now that the first shock was over, her imagination began again to assert itself and to reveal the impossibilities of her position.

Brought up, as she had been, in the family of her mother's sister, Mrs. Hartley, who took her when a motherless infant of a week, she had never even dimly imagined that the things of which she had read as happening to those strange people who fall in with wild adventures on land and sea, could, within the bounds of probability, ever happen to her. Her life in Boston had been the normal, regular existence, as child, school-girl and debutante, of the typical young woman of her class; very correct and with few excitements. She had studied privately at home, attended a select and exclusive school in the Back Bay, and had been duly presented to the best circles of society. After two winters of dinners and dances, luncheons and opera, she had become engaged to Mr. Ellery Oldsworth, a young man of her own caste, whom she had known from early childhood, and who, just from Cambridge, was making a pleasant start on the preassured road to local importance by running errands for a banking firm, the name of which was a State Street classic. It was not that he needed the seven dollars

a week the position paid, but because it had been ordained when he was born, just as his name had been entered as a future attendant at the school in which he prepared for college, and for membership in the club which was a family tradition. Nothing had been overlooked or left to chance in this young man's life; all had been prepared, as it were, generations in advance, and, as a result, he naturally enough came to look on the world as more or less his indivdual oyster, which, already opened for him, was being properly and duly presented on the half shell, with condiments ready to his hand.

This atmosphere of security and well being Eleanor Channing had shared. To her, adventure, or any misplaced happening, was essentially vulgar. At twenty-one she had already developed the half-cynical viewpoint common to her type, from which she looked out upon life as from an eminence from which there could be no descent. She shared with Mr. Ellery Oldsworth the knowledge that they were admirably fitted to view the mildly amusing world together from the same pinnacle, in the comfortably uncrowded companionship of the common friends who occupied that high position with them.

Her engagement having been announced in the fall, she was now going on a short visit to her father before the wedding, which was to take place the following September. Major Channing, being an

active and ambitious member of his profession, had given but little time to the up-bringing of his only child. Moved at rather frequent intervals from one post to another, both at home and abroad, sometimes with his regiment, but more often on detached duty on departmental boards or as military attache to some embassy or legation, the reason for his neglect was adequate. Having little beside his pay, which was more than swallowed up in necessary expenses incurred in the line of duty, he had been well content to leave his daughter in the kindly hands of her mother's people, who, having no children of their own, had cheerfully and delightedly accepted the trust.

The prospect of the trip was something of a bore to Miss Channing, but after the whirl from coast to coast in the chill of March, the warming breezes of the Pacific had been welcome, and until the hurricane she had been enjoying the rest the voyage had brought from a winter of social gaiety. As there was no one on board the *Marquesas* who could for any possible reason be called interesting, she and Mrs. Hartley had settled down to the monotony of the long sea trip when their calm was interrupted by the discomfort of the storm. This over, though the accident to the ship's propeller had been an annoyance, routine had been fairly restored, when, with the appalling suddenness of a blow in the dark,

the disaster had come which at once had robbed the girl of every shred of the fabric of her environment and cast her out on the breast of the waters, helpless, comfortless, and alone.

The roar of the first explosion, the crashing timbers, the cries of the passengers, the gurgling of the water in the hold and the horrible uncertainty had tried her to the utmost, but the second shock, which gave the ship its death blow, and, in an instant, had crushed out the life of her foster mother, was a stunning impact on her mind that came back to her with recurring horror. The sickening thought of the moment when, hurled to the floor of her stateroom, she realized that her aunt had been killed, and that she herself was pinned down to drown like a rat in a sinking ship, now and again swept her with a cold wave of terror.

Her present predicament brought the thought of her rescuer, the second officer. She had a remembrance of having seen him about the deck, but he had only shared in the casual notice she had bestowed upon her circumstantial companions, as one of the persons who hurried back and forth attending to the running of the ship. Beyond that Starbuck had made no impression on her. She did not even know his name. The other man in the boat, the Frenchman, she had been aware of as a rather loudly dressed foreigner, whose manners were ap-

parently agreeable to a number of women he had met, and to whom he assiduously devoted his attention. That he was anxious to enlarge his acquaintance in her direction was plainly shown when, at Honolulu, he had stood near her at the rail and pointed out with carefully planned pseudo-spontaneity of manner, the tricolour of the French consulate as the steamer neared her anchorage. An absent and distinctly well-bred bow was all she had vouchsafed to this advance, and even a shipboard acquaintance needs a firmer foundation for continuance. From the passenger list she knew that his name was Henri Aubert. His present cowering attitude and the evident enmity of the second officer did not rouse her sympathy, for even at the moment of leaving the ship, she had divined that there was some good reason for the man's being left by the others.

Coming back to the present she saw, or rather felt, that something had changed. She remembered that she had been instructed to keep the wind squarely in her face, but now there was no wind. Peering at Starbuck, she perceived that he was no longer rowing. He sat at the oars with drooping head, and, while the blades still held the water, they no longer moved.

"He's asleep," she thought. "How can he sleep at such a time?"

She bent over and touched him on the arm. Broad awake in an instant, the sailor looked quickly around.

"I must have dropped off for a wink or two," he said, as the oars began to move again. "You should have waked me before," he added. "Not that it's much use to pull, but I suppose we ought to keep moving. The wind has dropped altogether," he explained, "and they will be making better time still, but we may have a chance in the morning when we get our bearings. I can't tell how we're heading with this smudge overhead."

"What are we to do if you don't find them?" asked the girl, leaning forward and speaking in a low voice. "What chance have we to be picked up?"

"Well, Miss, you see, it's like this. We were blown off our course a long way by that rampaging no'theaster, and we're pretty well out of the steamer track. There's some trading vessels that come down this way to the Marshalls and the Gilberts' but not many this time of year, when the monsoon's changing and hurricanes like what we went through are lying around loose. I should say our best chance is to make one of these islands that must lie hereabouts and wait until something comes along to take us off."

"But that may be days," said the girl in hor-

ror, "and we have no provisions or clothes or — "

A short, low laugh from the man stopped her.

"There'll be provisions enough I guess," he said, "breadfruit and cocoanuts and yams and bananas. We sha'n't starve on any island in these waters."

The thought of provisions evidently started a new train of thought, for, abruptly breaking off his explanation, he felt beneath the thwart, groping for something in the darkness. Not finding it, he peered into the stern where the girl sat.

"Is there a small tin case under you there?" he asked, leaning forward.

She felt but reported nothing. Quickly Starbuck turned and stepped to the bow. Stooping over, he uttered an exclamation of anger and smothered an oath as he lifted to view a canister of ship's biscuits, the top of which had been pierced with a knife blade and turned back.

"You damned hog!" he fulminated, shaking his fist at the man in the bottom of the boat. "I beg your pardon, Miss," he broke off, turning back to the girl, "but this — this fellow here has been broaching the provisions and he's made a hole in 'em that looks like he had been at it pretty steady. Just keep your eye on that case for the rest of the

voyage. I'll promote you from passenger to steward, and nobody is to touch that tin without the skipper's orders. Let's see if he's emptied the water breaker."

Plunging forward again and seizing the wooden keg that lay in its place on the boat's bottom, he shook it. The swash of the water inside told him that it had been tapped, though it was still nearly full.

"Say," he drawled to the Frenchman, who now sat up in an attitude of half-expectant anxiety and fear of an attack, "what do you think this is, Thanksgiving?"

"I felt a faintness," spoke the Frenchman, deprecatingly, "I have not had food for many hours and the terrible excitement has made me ill. I saw no harm."

"No," replied Starbuck, in deep disgust, "you saw no harm in filling your skin with victuals that may have to keep the three of us God knows how long. You can understand right now, my friend, that I am the skipper of this craft, and if you so much as look at that tin or that water breaker without my permission, I'll throw you overboard. Now," he continued, "you need exercise to digest that full meal, so get up there and have a rowing lesson."

The man clambered to the midship thwart and

clumsily grasped the oars. At Starbuck's direction he began to ply them with more or less effect, and the boat moved again, slowly onward through the darkness.

The three spoke no more and the minutes dragged by, the silence broken now and then by a sigh from the toiling man as he shifted his grip on the oars and straightened his bowed back in fatigue. But Starbuck, merciless, sitting behind him, held him to his task until a faint streak of light marked the east and presaged the coming of a new day. The first false gleam of dawn left the night blacker than before, and worn out at last with thoughts and fears, the girl slipped gently to the grating beneath her feet and slept, huddled in the tangle of bedding Starbuck had thrown around her shoulders, her head resting upon her arm.

Finally, after a period that seemed interminable, the day broke. The clouds on the horizon lightened and lifted in a rosy streak, and the red ball of the tropic sun shot up from the sea like a globe of molten metal. Almost at once it was broad daylight and Starbuck wearily stood up on his thwart to gaze about the narrow circle within his vision. His trained eye quickly scanned the wave crests but saw only a waste of waters, gray-green under the clouds overhead but turning white, then blue in the distance, as the sky cleared before the growing day.

No boats were to be seen, and with a glance at the sleeping girl and a low growl of caution to the man, he motioned him back to the bow and took the oars again.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND OFFICER TAKES CHARGE

ALMOST immediately after finishing his task Aubert fell asleep in his old place. The girl did not stir and Starbuck hardly rowed, fearing to wake her with the clump of the oarlocks. He sat looking about him, now and then taking a short stroke to keep the boat's head to the seas, for the man was deadly weary, not having slept for two days before the wreck. With consciously dulling mind he conned the situation carefully; at the time of the explosion he knew the *Marquesas* had been driven into the region of the Eastern Carolines, but that they now must be still at a considerable distance south was apparent from the fact that after the storm no land had been sighted. Since the wreck the boat could have made but little progress in any direction, for although it had been kept headed well to the north, no very strenuous rowing had been done and it was doubtful if they had fairly held their own against the light breeze and the ocean

currents, which, in this locality, followed the direction of the monsoon at a rate of about three miles an hour.

Starbuck could see no possible hope of overtaking the other boats, which, being larger and deeply loaded, had probably been able to beat to the northward under sail. This he was unable to do, the dinghy being a light, shallow craft, which, though fitted for a sail, could do little except before the wind. The possibility of their being picked up by any vessel was extremely remote, in the mind of the sailor, for trading vessels were scarce in these parts, the Carolines and the Marshall group being unremarkable for their wealth in either pearl shell or copra. Most of the islands in this latitude being of coral formation, either mere atolls or raised at most a few feet above the level of the sea, vegetation was limited, and the population sparse and shifting.

The idea of working far enough to the north to intercept the Manila liners had been given only slight consideration by the sailor. Against wind and current it was a hopeless task, and now that the chance of overtaking the boats was utterly lost, the plan was not to be thought of. It seemed better to bear to the southwest, and, taking advantage of natural conditions, endeavour to make one of the scattered islands that he certainly knew to be near

enough for practicable effort. Accordingly, he swung the boat's head toward the mounting sun. A flat calm prevailed and it was already uncomfortably warm.

The boat lay sluggishly on the smooth swell, rippleless, save where occasionally a small school of flying fish rose and skimmed away to the southward. The progress to be made with the oars was slight, but he pulled gently. As the sun rose higher the stillness and the heat became oppressive and he remembered that he had neither eaten nor drunk since leaving the steamer. He reached for the case of ship's biscuit that lay beside the girl, and peering in, he now discovered that more than a third of them were gone.

Angrily, with a smothered imprecation, he turned to where the Frenchman lay with gaping mouth and eyes that showed the whites beneath their bluish lids. He started toward him, but remembering in time the sleeping girl, stopped and sat down, examining again the half-emptied tin.

"How could the dog have eaten that much?" he thought. "He couldn't have done it while I was awake, and I didn't drop off for more than five minutes."

He rose, slowly this time, and crept forward. A coat the man had worn until forced to take his turn at the oars, lay doubled and jammed into the

bow. Stepping over the body of Aubert, he lifted the garment and felt of the pockets. Each was stuffed with biscuits and even the lining of the back had been slit to serve as a hiding place for more. Starbuck turned white with rage under his deeply bronzed skin. His hands twitched and his chest heaved as he restrained his righteous anger at the sleeping man before him. Had he been alone he might have strangled him as he lay, but something in the sight of the still figure in the stern held his hand. Slowly he emptied the coat of its contents, placing the biscuits carefully back in the canister. He even forebore to waken Aubert, for he did not dare to trust himself to speak lest his rage should loose itself. Grimly he stepped back to the middle of the boat and sat looking at the huddled girl.

The wraps about her had fallen so as to almost cover her face, shielding it from the sun, which now was beating down in tropical fierceness. The heat was great and the girl must be sweltering under her coverings, he thought. Still she slept on and he did not think of wakening her. Once more he scanned the sea, standing on the thwart and shielding his eyes with his hands. Nothing was visible but the gleaming, satin-smooth, heaving water, whose long, calm roller followed them, passed underneath, and on, and on.

He was becoming restless and his mouth was parched and dry. His tongue felt rough and his eyes burned from want of sleep. Raising the water breaker, he pulled out the bung and drank one or two long swallows. The relief was grateful but he wished for sleep more than for food or drink. Still he did not dare to rest while both the others slumbered. He must never sleep, he reflected as he caught a movement of the unconscious Frenchman, except when the girl was awake; one must always watch this man. To turn his attention from himself, he took up the oars and pulled steadily for some time. He decided, on thinking it over, to say nothing for the present of the attempt of Aubert to secrete the biscuits. It would do no good and would only serve to alarm the girl. He would take good care that nothing of the sort should happen again, and acting on this thought he moved the keg of water from its place between the forward and middle thwarts to the space between him and the stern, where it would be constantly under his own eye. As he did so he knocked his elbow against the handle of an oar as it swung in the rowlock, and stirring slightly, the girl awoke.

Drawing back the covering from her head, she sat up, staring around her in a quick, startled way, blinking sharply at the glare of light and stretching her cramped limbs. As she noted Starbuck she

nodded and lifted herself to the thwart behind her.

"I must have slept for hours," she said as she put her hands up to adjust her disordered hair and to straighten the tie at her throat.

"It has cleared off, hasn't it," she went on, "and it is so very warm."

She threw off the blankets with relief and dipped her hands into the water alongside, passing them, dripping, over her face and forehead, which she presently dried with a minute handkerchief.

Starbuck watched these little operations with interest.

"You're hungry, aren't you, and thirsty too, I guess," he said, with a motion toward the water keg at his feet.

The taste of salt water on her lips brought home the dryness of her throat and she replied that she would both eat and drink, if viands were plentiful in mid-Pacific.

"Better eat one or two of these first," said Starbuck, offering the open canister to her. "They're dry, but the water is pretty warm by now and it will taste better afterwards."

Miss Channing nibbled gingerly at the bread, crunching the crumbs between strong, white teeth. As she ate, she gazed about at the sea as if it were a new thing. The calmness and the steadiness of

the boat gave her almost a sense of security as she watched the strong, short strokes of the man at the oars.

"I do not see any great shrinkage in our provisions," she said, as she felt in the tin for another biscuit, "I cannot believe that the man has taken more than his share, and I believe you have not had yours at all."

Words sprang to Starbuck's tongue that he had difficulty in stopping.

"I have had enough," he said shortly, though as a matter of fact he had eaten nothing.

"And now," said Miss Channing as she brushed the fragments from her skirt, "may I have some water, please?"

"I'm afraid you'll find our cut glass rather rough," answered Starbuck. "Will you have it straight, out of the bung hole, or will you use the bailing dish?"

The galvanized dipper that swung on a lanyard from a brace, she inspected with a slight expression of disgust as she viewed the greasy-looking, brown bilge-water in the boat's bottom.

"I believe I prefer the keg," she said, and leaned forward to lift it.

"Here," intervened Starbuck, "I'll hold it for you. I could pour it into your palms but we mustn't waste it. It's all we are likely to get."

He held the breaker carefully while she applied her lips to the somewhat large hole in its side and awkwardly drank a few swallows.

The water was warm and evil smelling, but the thirst of a night and a forenoon was compelling, and though it sickened her, she felt better for the grateful moisture in her throat and turned to question Starbuck on the matter that was now uppermost in her mind.

"You have not seen the other boats?" was her question.

Starbuck shook his head.

"As I said last night," he replied, "they have outrowed us four to one and we could not catch them now if we had a motor. Our best chance is land of some sort, if we can find it, and we are certain to do that. It is only a question of time. I expect we shall catch a breeze later in the day," he added, glancing to the northward, "and then we may be able to use the sail and get on faster. There's nothing to do now but keep moving as best we can with the oars."

"And have you been rowing all this time?" she asked. "You will wear yourself out. Have you slept at all?"

Her anxiety seemed to have little sympathy in it for the man himself, but the question was asked more as one of the formal civilities which the occa-

sion seemed to demand. Strong and muscular as Starbuck was, his life as a watch officer of the *Marquesas* had involved but little physical labour, and, having grown somewhat soft, the exertions of the past twelve hours had tired him more than he would have supposed. Still, there was something of a challenge in the words of the young woman before him, and though he knew that he should take his sleep, he said nothing and buckled to his work once more.

Sitting silent in the stern, Miss Channing, for the first time, thoroughly inspected the man before her.

Starbuck was little more than thirty, somewhat above medium height, with a well knit figure, straight-backed and of good proportions. He had a broad brow and a firm, well cut jaw. His nose was straight and his mouth wide. He still wore his uniform cap with the insignia of the line, and under it grew thick, crisp hair of a tawny colour, that was not unbecoming to the red-brown face and neck it shadowed. Withal, it was a somewhat stern but ordinarily a pleasant face to look upon, and though just now there were in it certain lines of fatigue and care, there were other lines that plainly showed that this was a man of resource, firmness and determination. He had taken off his coat early in the day, and with sleeves rolled above his wrists, the girl saw the blue and red marks of tattooing on one of

his forearms. She looked closely, but could not make out the design. It seemed to be some sort of a fish.

Beyond Starbuck she saw the form of Aubert, still sleeping, with his face now buried in his arms.

"That poor man!" she exclaimed, "he will roast alive."

To Starbuck there seemed to be a note of sympathy in her voice, which had been absent in her inquiries concerning himself. This he vaguely resented, though he could not but admit that her remark was reasonable. However he did not offer to rouse the Frenchman and showed but little interest in his comfort. The desire for sleep was becoming irresistible, and it was only with the greatest effort that he kept at the oars.

Finally he stopped rowing. The wind was still absent, and though he scanned the sky with a sailor's glance, he discovered no sign of a breeze.

Stooping, he picked up the biscuit tin and helped himself to two. As he munched, Miss Channing watched the hard muscles of his jaw that made bulges come and go in his cheeks, and a little disgusted with the fervour of his mastication, she looked off over the dazzling sea, where the heat waves were now rising in trembling, gaseous spirals from the low wave crests.

His meal quickly finished, Starbuck washed it

down with a single swallow of water and turned to her.

"Miss Channing," he said, "I must get a little sleep. You must understand this; so long as we three are in this boat, either you or I must always be awake. That man, asleep there, is not to be trusted. I have had good proof of it. Do you understand? It is necessary that you keep awake, and that you wake me if he wakes. I will give you my watch and you must not let me sleep more than an hour. If you notice any change in the weather or if you see any cloud in the sky, no matter how small, please call me at once."

Unused to taking orders from any one, much less those of an almost common sailor-man, Miss Channing's chin went up a trifle and her eyelids lowered.

"Why, yes," was the reply, "of course, if anything happens I will waken you."

He took out his watch, hanging by a leather thong.

"Place this over your wrist," he said, handing it to her. "There is nothing for you to do but keep awake."

He rolled his coat into a ball, and, curling up in the bottom of the boat between the centre and forward thwarts, was almost instantly asleep.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

THE long, hot, dazzling day crept on. The sun, now almost at the zenith, sent down its impacting rays upon the sea until it quivered with the reflected heat. The dinghy was of iron and the paint began to blister and bubble as the metal grew so hot that it almost burned the flesh if a hand was laid upon it.

Miss Channing, left to her own devices, thought of forming some sort of shelter of the bedding on which she now sat, but the best she could do was to throw the heap over the grating to keep it fairly cool against the time when it should be her turn to sleep. The sun, beating on her unprotected head, made her feel a little faint. She wished for a parasol.

At last, fearing a heat stroke, she soaked in sea water the neck and shoulders of the serge coat she had worn when she left the ship and threw the garment over her head like a hood. The protection was not great but it afforded some relief from the

scorching rays, which seemed ever to increase in intensity. Remembering vaguely of reading that evaporation from a wet cloth would cool water in a vessel, she dipped one of the light blankets in the sea, and wrapped it about the water breaker, which lay at her feet. She was thirsty again, but did not attempt to lift the heavy keg. These things seemed to be nearly the sum total of her possible activities and after a time she sat still, suffering in the stifling, parching heat from which there was no relief. The calm was absolute.

Glancing from time to time at the huddled form of Aubert, she wondered how the man could sleep on so steadily. A slight snore from time to time broke the stillness. All at once, as the boat heaved to a large wave, she heard a clink of glass against iron and at the same time caught sight of the neck of a bottle, rolling slightly on the dinghy's bottom and almost under the Frenchman's body. The explanation was clear. The man was drunk. How and where he had procured liquor was a mystery, but the swollen eyelids and the redness of an exposed cheek, together with the occasional stertorous breathing, told the story well enough. For a time she was undecided what to do. Her first thought was to awaken Starbuck, but he had dropped so instantly asleep that she knew that he must be in great need of rest. The Frenchman could do no

harm so long as he was in his present condition, she reflected, and if he waked she would then only be following instructions in rousing the sailor. So she waited, disgusted and disturbed.

Her thoughts turned back to the steamer and to her aunt, Mrs. Hartley, whom she had left there lying dead by violence; she who had nursed her from infancy, who had been the only mother she had known and whose entire life had been spent so far from the hateful turmoil of the world that her fate was hardly to be realized. Utterly lonely, hopeless and miserable, the girl pulled the coat further over her face and wept softly.

As she raised her hand to dry her wet cheeks the watch Starbuck had given her swung dangling from its leather thong and she remembered that he had said an hour. The hour was already gone and another well begun. Still she did not arouse the sleeper. What good, she thought; he could do nothing for her. Two hours passed, and looking up from a long reverie, she noticed, far away, a small gray cloud lifting over the horizon. It had little meaning for her, but she recalled that Starbuck had given it as a reason for disturbing him. She leaned over the thwart and touched him on the shoulder. He turned, opened his eyes and looked into hers inquiringly, at once awake and alert.

"I'm afraid I have disregarded your instruc-

tions," she said as he rose and stood erect, "but you seemed so comfortable in your unconsciousness of the heat that I had scarcely the heart to rouse you."

He reached out for the watch, and glancing at it, smiled.

"Perhaps it was just as well," he said. "I feel like a new man."

"The thing that finally compelled me to speak to you," she said, pointing with her hand, "was that little cloud over there. It seemed so insignificant that I thought it a slight reason, but as you specified the smallest kind of cloud, I thought it best for you to know."

Starbuck followed her slim, outstretched finger with his eye and was about to speak when he was interrupted by a cry of surprise from the girl.

"Why," she exclaimed, "it has grown so much bigger!"

The gray dot had spread rapidly and was now the size of a blanket, growing, even as they gazed.

Starbuck looked long and fixedly. His smile was gone and a look of quiet grimness took its place.

"Well," he said at last, "it is likely to be cooler before long."

"What do you mean?" asked the girl, anxiously searching his face.

"I mean," he answered, dropping his gaze to

meet hers, "that it is likely to — that we may get a breeze," he finished.

"Do you mean by that that it will be a 'breeze of wind,' as you sailors call a gale?" she asked.

"Well," he answered more volubly, "you see, in this latitude, and at this time of year, when the season is changing, you can't always be certain what may come up. It is nearly time for the no'theast monsoon to shift to a sou'easter and the process is sometimes one that kicks up a good deal of fuss. But," he continued, reassuringly, "that don't look to me like a blow though we may get a squall out of it and some rain, and it will be just as well to make things snug before it comes."

He turned to more firmly secure the boathook and an extra pair of oars that were lashed under the thwarts, when the girl touched his arm.

"I think," she said in a whisper, "that Monsieur Aubert may need a little attention. Just before I wakened you I noticed the reason, perhaps, for the soundness of his sleep. There it is, you can see it rolling just beneath his arm."

Starbuck looked and stiffened. With a growl he was starting forward when the girl stopped him.

"Please," she said, "please don't have a scene with him. He brought it from the steamer, I suppose, and has an unfortunate habit. We, all of us, are in a common danger here, and we should be

tolerant of each other's shortcomings, don't you think?"

"But," exclaimed Starbuck, anger rising red in his face, "*I* brought that bottle from the ship. I found it in a stateroom where I got the bed clothes and took it along for emergencies. This hog must have stolen it from my coat while I was rowing, and he has probably drunk all there was. Such things as this cannot go on. Why," he exclaimed, "if he was to get what is coming to him he would go to feed the sharks, under some captains I have sailed with. It's more than stealing. It's mutiny. Suppose he had stolen what little food and water we have, and had the power to keep it. Why, he might sit and watch us dry up and starve, while he laughed in our faces."

"But why," returned the girl, "why should he wish to do any such thing? There is food and water enough to last us to land, isn't there? There is no danger of our starving or going insane for want of water, as I have read of shipwrecked people doing?"

Starbuck was silent. He did not wish to frighten her, but it seemed necessary that she should understand.

"I hope," he said rather brusquely, "that in a case like this my judgment is fit to be taken. I do not want to alarm you needlessly, but the fact of

our position is this; we are somewhere in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in a small boat that is none too seaworthy in such weather as we may meet. We stand little chance of a rescue in these waters. I intend to make an island, if possible, before our food and water give out. How long it will take I do not know. Every crumb of biscuit and every drop of water must count for something. The bottle of brandy that this French hound has drunk to satisfy his thirst for alcohol might have swung the balance in our favour at the last. Do you see now what I mean? He is a thief; he is the sort who would rob a baby of its bottle. And this is not the first time," Starbuck went on. "This morning, early, while you were asleep, I took from his pockets and the lining of his coat more than a dozen biscuits that he had hidden."

"Oh," cried the girl, "I knew there was something behind your treatment of him. And on the ship, why was it that you kicked him into the boat when we came away?"

"That!" Starbuck laughed grimly. "Oh, that was because he was there *at all*. When I went for the blankets I found him lying on the deck, where he fell when I knocked him down as he was trying to crowd into one of the boats ahead of the women. I left him when I heard your cries from below and forgot him when we came on deck. I stumbled

over him again as I came from the stateroom and hauled him along."

The explanation was given simply, as merely a history of facts, with no hint of brutality or bluster, but out of it stood one inference that caused Eleanor Channing to pause and wonder, with a growing tightness around her heart. "*Because he was there at all.*" Was it possible, then, that this man desired to be alone with her, that he sought a pretext for the elimination of the other? To have her to himself? This was a new thought and it struck her almost as a physical blow. Up to that moment she had only considered their common danger and the chances of escape. That she was alone in a boat on the open sea with two strange men was embarrassing, but the complication of personal peril on her own account had not before shaped itself. Now she not only saw the hideous possibility, but she saw no escape. Such weakness and selfishness as the Frenchman had shown certainly did not point to him as a possible protector. On the other hand, the attitude of Starbuck, up to the present time, had been as impersonal as was possible under the circumstances, and though brutal he might be, his frank blue eye seemed to belie him. She tried to put away the suspicion as unworthy, but doubt lingered and grew in spite of her. The thing was so impossible, yet so terrible in its possibility.

Before she had time to formulate any attitude in the light of her new fear, she noticed that Starbuck was leaning over the prostrate Aubert. He raised him bodily from the bottom and sat him down heavily on the forward thwart. The man wobbled soddenly, inert, his head bobbing, the saliva drooling from his chin. She watched Starbuck scoop water in his hand from overside and dash it in the stupid face. Again and again he did it, but the water was too warm to afford much of a shock, and, seeing that his efforts were useless, he let the limp body sink to the bottom of the dinghy, where it lay on its face until the man, disturbed, rolled over on his back, an ugly sight. She turned away.

Starbuck had picked up the bottle and was examining it. The cork was still in but the brandy was at low ebb. Not more than a gill or two was left. He came aft with it and handed it to her, saying:

"I blame myself for not looking out for this. You must keep it carefully."

The sky had grown quickly overcast, and, as he spoke, a puff of wind was visible, marking the water to the northeast and turning the glassy surface to a dark purple as it came on rapidly. Starbuck, erect, watched it for a moment and abruptly seating himself, took up the oars. The first breath of breeze cooled the hot air gratefully, but it soon passed and though the sun was hidden, the atmosphere seemed

to grow suddenly more oppressive than before. Its stillness was the stillness of death. The sky had turned to a sickly yellow, and the water, rippled a moment before, now became a smooth, oily mass, that rose and fell ceaselessly, without life or vigour.

Miss Channing could see the anxiety in Starbuck's face as he scanned the clouds, which were now scudding fast before an unfelt wind. Of a sudden the squall broke. A driving blast seemed almost to raise the boat bodily and hurl it forward with a rushing and gurgling of waters as the stern lifted, burying the nose of the craft in the sea. Shipping the short tiller, Starbuck gave it into the girl's hands, and shouted instructions for her to steer with the wind. He steadied the boat with the oars, keeping out of the trough of the fast rising sea. The squall was coming now in sharp gusts that tore the spindrift from the waves and sent it whirling over the boat as the craft leaped forward. Cowering under the blankets she had thrown about her head and shoulders, the girl gripped the tiller with desperation, holding against the jerk of the rudder with all her strength. Starbuck, battling with the oars, but pulling effectively, nodded encouragement from time to time as he dashed the salt water from his eyes with his sleeve.

The sea was mounting rapidly, but by skillful watermanship the sailor kept the dinghy's head

before it and prevented the breaking masses of water astern from engulfing them. It was hard work at best, but doubly so with a novice at the tiller. However, the excitement of battle growing in her heart, the girl quickly caught the feel of the water as it leaped and fell away behind her and learned instinctively to humour the craft in its course, thereby lightening to some extent the work of the oarsman.

The wind gradually became steadier as the first squall passed, the sky took on a grayer shade, and, though it still blew heavily, it was apparent that the worst was over for the time being. The seas grew more regular, the short chop giving place to larger but longer rollers that broke less often, decreasing their menace to the boat. Starbuck, with watchful eye, noted the signs and breathed a sigh of relief at the passing of the flurry. No rain fell.

"That's the worst of it," he cried, as he shook the water from his hair. "We shall get more wind, perhaps, but it will be wind that we can count on and I'm not sorry to see it. It was mighty hot awhile back, and besides, it will help us on our way."

Cautioning the girl to keep the boat's head as it was, he rose and unlashed the mast with its rolled up sail, which lay beside him on the thwarts.

"I guess she'll stand a part of this," he said, as he picked it up and crawled over the Frenchman.

Quickly he stepped the light spar in place. It was a leg o' mutton sail that he unfurled but, on second thought he reefed the peak down some distance, so that the short boom rose at an acute angle when the sail filled. Leading the sheet aft, he took a turn around a cleat and motioned Miss Channing to make room for him beside her in the stern. She started to move from her seat, but the stern was wide enough and he signed for her to sit still. He took the tiller from her hand and settled back while the boat leaped forward under its new impulse.

"Now we can feel that our day's run may amount to something," he said. "I hate a pair of oars. I've handled so many of 'em."

Steadied by the bit of cloth, the dinghy handled well and as the wind did not increase perceptibly in vigour, Starbuck had no difficulty in keeping her running before it. By this time it was past mid-afternoon and the desire for food and drink was once more becoming oppressive. At his suggestion the contents of the biscuit tin was counted and they found to their dismay that during the squall, salt water had splashed through the cut top, soaking and ruining the upper layers. Minus these, less than twenty biscuits were left in good condition.

"Three goes in twenty, six times and two over," counted Starbuck, as he caught Miss Channing's look of dismay. "That makes six meals for each

of us, one biscuit apiece and two over for the first cabin, which must mean you," he grinned. "You better eat one of those now along with your regular ration. It's easier to keep your strength than to get it back. How are we off for water?" he continued, tapping the breaker with his foot. "She's pretty full yet. It'll last longer than the bread, I'm thinking. Why," he exclaimed, "I've been in a lot harder fix than this, as far as food goes, and as for chances, I would take a lay that we'll be eating bananas and drinking cocoanuts by this time to-morrow, so cheer up, Miss Channing. You've been a good castaway so far," he added, smiling down at her.

She shivered a little and pulled the blanket closer about her face.

Aubert, who all through the storm had lain as one dead, now showed signs of life. With a groan, he raised himself on his elbow, and looked about, dazed, apparently, by the change that had taken place. He groped cautiously with his hand, evidently feeling for his precious bottle, and failing to find it, sank back with a sigh. Starbuck watched him narrowly. That the man was suffering he had no doubt. A good portion of a quart of brandy on an empty stomach is an insult that nature does not soon forget, and the torture of a burning thirst was not the least of the Frenchman's pains. Soon he raised himself again and motioned Starbuck toward

him. The sailor did not move, and finally Aubert cried hoarsely that he wanted water.

"I expect he'd like some of that brandy mighty well," muttered the sailor under his breath, "but he won't get it."

Urged by the girl, who had been watching the little scene, Starbuck poured a cupful of water from the keg into the bailing dish and shoved it forward into the Frenchman's grasp, scarcely leaving the tiller.

"Toss him a biscuit, too," cried the girl impulsively, reaching toward the precious tin.

"No," Starbuck interfered, "food is the last thing he'll want just yet. And dry food at that. I know the signs."

After his drink of water the Frenchman subsided and lay muttering now and then to himself, his fingers twitching and his body a-quiver with nervous spasms.

It was evident now that the sun was dropping. The water took on a darker tinge and the frosted wave caps began to show white against the greenish seas. The wind had fallen to a steady sailing breeze, which, though it seemed almost a gale to the girl, was really no more than the small boat could easily stand.

"If I were you," spoke Starbuck, almost in the girl's ear, "I should sleep if I could. You have a

good chance now while things are holding steady. Curl up on the grating there and you can rest your head against my knee to brace you when she pitches."

The idea of personal contact with this man after the fears he had awakened in her, was so repugnant that involuntarily she shrugged and moved farther away from him. But she did not wish him to read her thoughts and made preparations to rest, though she did not expect to sleep. Curled in the bottom, she made a pillow of her blanket and settled herself. The tropic night fell rapidly. No stars came out and the boat sailed on with a steady helm, the way lighted dimly by the shining crests of the surrounding seas.

Starbuck knew that the progress the boat was making under sail, added to the drift of the ocean current, should sweep him into the region of scattered islands in no great length of time. Aware that most of the groups were of low, coraline formation, he kept a sharp lookout and listened intently to catch the sound of breakers on reefs, which might now crop out anywhere. But as the night wore on he heard and saw nothing. After a time the heavens began to clear, and, one by one, the hidden stars came out, giving him his course to the southeast. Fully cognizant of the danger of the season's shifting winds, he desired to the utmost to make a

landfall at the earliest possible moment, and to this end he shook out the reef he had taken in the sail. The boat stood the additional canvas well enough, though occasionally she buried her bows deep in the hollows, sending showers of spray over Aubert, who, though awake, except for now and then a groan of alcoholic misery, lay silent on his back.

The brandy, his empty stomach and the uneasy motion of the boat had combined to make him very ill, but Starbuck had no feeling for the man, though he knew what he must suffer. At intervals the girl at his feet shifted her position with a little moan of discomfort. It must be tough for her, he thought, the entire experience. He divined the shock that her relative's death had been, but even greater, he imagined, was the isolation from every tradition of security and ease to which she had doubtless been accustomed from her very birth. He knew nothing of her except her name as it appeared on the steamer's passenger list, and her place of residence.

Being from the East himself, though he had spent little time there since boyhood, he knew perfectly the sort of people she had lived among, the cultured Boston type, ultra-refined, perhaps, from common standards, but at least representative of the best civilization. Rough sailor though he was, his experience was perhaps beyond that of many lands-

men of his years, his seafaring career from early youth having carried him into many ports and associated him with many kinds of people. Untutored in the niceties of life and caring little for them, Starbuck was of better than the average mental calibre, and had drawn wide knowledge from his observation of human life until it had become a habit with him to label and file away the people he met in the category of his mind, whence he could recall the widely variant types for the addition of some new individual. This girl, at first, had been hard to place.

His experience with her sex had not been markedly limited, but she was a new type to him. Her bravery he admired. The lack of all signs of feminine hysteria in a difficult situation had puzzled him not a little, but her purely impersonal manner, disdainful even in the face of perfectly apparent danger, was a new sensation. None of the women he had known would have taken such an attitude; still, pending more definite conclusions concerning her, he was willing to accept it and to guage his own behaviour in accordance. One fact was clear in his mind; she considered him far beneath her in every way and her distant civility told him plainly that he was not expected to encroach upon their acquaintance. He did not resent this but was rather amused by it, since he knew that there

must, sooner or later, come a time when she would be forced to seek his protection and his services, divorced from the present remnant of formality which he conceived to be demanded by his duty as a ship's officer.

Of her appearance he distinctly approved. Her figure, in its short serge skirt, was trim, even though the shirtwaist she wore was soiled and crumpled. And her hair, abundant and golden brown, though roughened by the wind and dampened by the spray, shone with health and good grooming. Her face, ordinarily rather pale as he had seen her aboard the ship, was now reddened by the sun. During the blow, excitement had added to its colour, and, with her deep gray eyes bright, and her figure tense in its struggle with the bucking rudder, the picture that had faced him from the stern was still pleasant to his mind. But her type, so far as he was able to place it, was one that he did not particularly admire, though he never before had been in such close contact with it, and this feeling, together with the habit of duty, still strong in him, perhaps reduced to a minimum his efforts toward a more personal relationship.

After a time Starbuck's thoughts turned again in the direction of land and safety. The Carolines, he knew, were sparsely inhabited by a fairly peaceful people of the mixed races of Micronesia, num-

bering between thirty and forty thousand souls, the majority of whom occupied the groups of islands farther west. The chance, he thought, was rather against any of the atolls in this eastern region being inhabited, at least by more than a shifting population, which moved from group to group, often for no apparent reason.

The Carolines were, he was aware, loosely administered by Germany, whose traders were scattered among the more important localities, and whose ships made more or less regular calls throughout the archipelago. To reach land, even if nothing more than the flimsy annulus of a coral atoll, and to be taken off by the first ship that sailed near enough to make out a signal, was now Starbuck's principal aim. To gain shelter, food and water meant life. To continue in this open boat with what provisions they now had, was death. The issue was very plain.

All through the long, tropic night he steered to the southwest, following the wind and scarcely taking his eyes from the stars that were his guide.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE WITH THE WAVES

TOWARD dawn, when the tide of human life is at its lowest ebb, a chill in the tropic air, combined with lack of food, sent Starbuck shivering. The thought of the brandy bottle crossed his mind, and on impulse he reached to where it lay under his feet and held it up. Its lightness stopped his hand as he was about to draw the cork, and he replaced the bottle with care. The movement had taken only a moment, but the gleam of the glass had caught the Frenchman's eye as he lay restlessly awake between the thwarts forward. The sickness of combined alcoholism and *mal de mer* had wrought in him a frenzied desire for drink to still his quivering nerves, and the sight of liquor so close at hand suddenly increased his longing to a complete obsession. He could see Starbuck, plainly outlined against the silvery light from the sea, and he thought and planned how he could gratify the thirst that now was burning him with the fires of hell. He watched and waited.

In the darkest hour, that in the tropics precedes the day, the strain of an all-night vigil was beginning to tell upon the sailor. His form in the sternsheets grew huddled and limp. He swayed as he sat and his head nodded once or twice, though he still mechanically held the tiller in a loose grip, subconsciously keeping the boat steady before the wind. The picture was not lost upon the Frenchman, who, now alert and crafty, raised his head and slowly brought himself to his hands and knees. He crept softly to the centre of the boat, waited, watched a moment, then eased himself over the thwart and reached a trembling and tentacle-like arm aft to where the bottle lay. His hand touched something soft and covered with a cloth. He quickly withdrew it, but as he did so a scream burst from the girl, whose body it was he had encountered.

Starbuck came to his feet with a start. Instantly he spied the half-crouching form of Aubert, and quicker than thought itself his right fist shot out, catching the man squarely on the mouth. He went over backward with a crash, his head striking hard against the thwart, and there he lay, half senseless, as, fully alive to his intent, Starbuck stepped across, bent only on punishment.

But guideless, the boat gibed and the light boom, swinging across with force, struck Starbuck a painful blow, barely grazing the head of the girl as

she half rose to stay his hand. Abandoning his purpose, he leaped back to the tiller and brought the dinghy again before the wind.

"What was it?" whispered the girl. "Some one touched me!"

Starbuck sought to control himself.

"Yes," he said, "that scum of a frog-eating Frenchman touched you. I must have fallen asleep at the helm, a nice thing for a man to do, and he was after what is left of that bottle of brandy. In the dark he didn't see you lying there and his hand struck you. Your scream roused me and I hit him. You saw that part of it."

The dawn was coming with equatorial suddenness and for a second time they saw the sun leap above the horizon and begin his scorching course through the heavens. The wind, holding in the same quarter, now freshened, blowing the spray again into their eyes, not ungratefully, for the cool, salt smell was refreshing as the new day broke.

Miss Channing glanced at the form of Aubert. His lips and nose were cut and bleeding from the heavy blow, and, still lying as he had fallen, he was ghastly.

"You — you don't suppose you have hurt him badly?" she said, with a shuddering but anxious look at the man's blood-spattered countenance. "See, he doesn't move. He must be stunned."

Starbuck gave a short laugh from which mirth was absent.

"Stunned?" he said, grimly, "I hope he is. Better men have been stunned just that way for less than that. He ought to be hung, not stunned."

"But aren't you going to do anything for him? Are you going to let him lie there bleeding?" asked the girl indignantly. "It's brutal. It's inhuman."

"Well, Miss," returned Starbuck, sarcastically, "as I'm at present the man at the wheel, and as it's no part of a helmsman's business to tend battered mutineers, I guess I am going to let him lie. He'll come to right enough. They generally do."

Angry and insulted at the man's cool refusal to act on her suggestion, Eleanor Channing rose to what she considered the occasion. Finding a handkerchief in the pocket of her coat, she dipped it in the sea and had started to step over the water breaker toward the prostrate man when a large hand barred her way and a low, stern voice bade her stop.

"Excuse *me,* Miss," it said, "but I must make this man understand. There would be no safety now, either for you or for me if I did not. Please sit down, and do not look at him if the sight disgusts you. I appreciate your feelings. You are unused to violence and," he smiled, "bloodshed. But it was not brutal; it was necessary."

Trembling and furious at being treated so like a child by this man, she did as she was bid. Presently Starbuck asked her to hold the tiller, apparently not noticing the tears of anger and humiliation that swam in her eyes nor the nether lip that twitched. Seizing the bailing dish he scooped it full of water, and stepping toward Aubert, soused its contents full in the man's face. The treatment was at least efficacious, for almost instantly he came to, looking up and dodging in time to escape another ducking. His swollen lips were drawn back in a snarl as he muttered an imprecation in French.

"Here," rasped Starbuck, "this lady has pleaded mercy for you. You don't deserve it but you're going to get another chance; just one. The next move you make to interfere in any way with my plans concerning this boat or anything in it, I'll tie you up hand and foot, and if I feel like I do now, I'll heave you overboard. If it wasn't for her I'd have done it long ago."

As he turned to take the tiller from her hand she noticed how white and pinched he looked. The ruddy colour was a sickly olive, and his eyes were sunken in his head. His hair, drenched with the night-dew, was straggled about his forehead. He had lost his cap, and the sun was beginning to beat down once more in merciless rays. Realizing the

man's condition, sleepless, except for the scarce two hours of rest he had snatched the day before, she was shocked at his appearance.

He sat down silently and her little feeling of victory at having made him do as she had wished, was gone as she noted the weariness of his perfunctory scanning of the horizon. Refreshed by her own rest, her feeling grew to pity, and without realizing that she did so, she laid a hand on his arm.

"You must have rest and food, you know," she said. "Shall we eat a little now?"

His hunger was intense, but with the biscuit tin in close proximity to her as she slept, he had forborne to move it lest she awake. Now, however, he took the two crackers she handed him and munched one rapidly. The other he tossed forward to Aubert, but the man's teeth had evidently been loosened by his fist and it was with some difficulty that he chewed the pieces which he broke off with the aid of a pocket knife. Starbuck eyed the knife sharply as he ate. Water was served out to all three and the day was begun.

With the stiff breeze the heat of the sun was not so intense as the day before, and good headway was being made. Starbuck, anxious to sight land before the fall of another night, showed his skill as a small boat sailor, humouring his frail craft and getting all her ability in return. He had refused to

rest and with tired eyes kept a sharp lookout for any speck that might show itself above the sea.

Miss Channing sat with her elbows on her knees, raising her head now and then to shake back the hair that swept across her face with the following wind. Once in a while she rose, as if cramped by want of exercise. On one of these occasions she stood longer than usual, gazing off to the south. Suddenly she turned to Starbuck and pointed excitedly in the direction she had been looking.

"There!" she cried, "don't you see? Off there, to the left? It shows just above the water. Oh, is it land? Tell me, is it land?"

Starbuck was beside her in an instant. Quickly he followed her gaze and looked long and earnestly at what he saw.

"Yes," he broke out, "it's land; thank God for it."

He put the helm over slightly, and trimming his sheet aft, headed for the little mound that now appeared, growing as they approached.

"It's land," he said, as he looked, "but it isn't what I expected to see. Most of these islands hereabouts are low, and you generally see them in clusters, two or three or sometimes more together or within a few miles. This one looks to be high, and there is only one, unless the others are hidden behind it."

"We may have sailed farther than you think," said the girl, still with her eyes fixed upon the distant island. "Aren't we going faster with the sail hauled in?"

Starbuck made no answer but gave all his attention to the boat. The wind had increased considerably as the sun rode higher, and he was having hard work to keep the light skiff on her course without shipping water. The wind, too, seemed to be hauling slightly to the east and the yellowish tint of the sky off toward the southern horizon was disquieting.

Twenty miles away the island had been when first they sighted it. Now it was nearing fast and they saw clearly that it was not a low island but one evidently of volcanic origin. The low peak rose two or three hundred feet above the sea, and as nearly as Starbuck could judge, had a length of about three miles. In an hour they were close enough to make out the green of the trees that fringed the shore, and the white line of breakers that beat on the enclosing reef.

This barrier now became the problem that Starbuck had to solve. The reefs, which are characteristic of most of the islands of the Pacific, are generally circular, often completely surrounding the islands they protect, with the exception of one or more openings, generally found, in islands of any

size, opposite the mouth of a brook or stream. Of coral formation, they are most often barely awash and the breakers pile up over them in roaring combers, which, even in moderate weather might well spell the fate of a small boat.

To seek out an opening in the sea that was now running, and to navigate it without mishap was a work of nicety and calculation, and Starbuck anxiously examined the line of breakers for a gap. The reef looked to be half to three-quarters of a mile from shore on this side of the island, but on the westerly side it was apparently much closer. Satisfied that on the windward side no entrance could be found, Starbuck eased off his sheet and took the wind astern again. Close, now, the waving cocoanut palms on the shore stood inviting with their shade, and other trees and shrubs darkened the background farther inland. No signs of human occupation were to be seen and Starbuck mentioned this fact in surprise, for here was an island worth the while of any Micronesian dweller. Richly fertile, it teemed with vegetation growing in the rank profusion of the tropic seas. Greens of every possible shade embowered the land, with here and there a spot of crimson where a scarlet hibiscus bloomed. Back from the shore line the terraced side of the volcano rose steeply, its summit gray and weather-beaten above the line of verdure. The highest peak

was to the west, running up into a broken cone, its contour showing ragged against the sky. No smoke issued from it, and the seams and gullies in its sides seemed to tell that it had been inactive for some length of time.

As the dinghy bore farther to the westward, Starbuck saw at last a break in the line of white, but it was in such a position that in order to enter under sail he would have to round to and run in on the wind, which, in the light, unballasted boat, was a dangerous trick to attempt. The seas were breaking heavily on the coral barrier, sending their long shreds of spray whipping across the quieter lagoon within and agitating the shallow water into long, undulating rollers, that swept on until they broke upon the beach. The reef at the point of the break was not above a quarter of a mile from shore, but across the gap the wash of the waves churned the water into an angry froth.

Starbuck rapidly decided that his only plan would be to sail almost to the break, bring the boat into the wind, and if possible by luffing, work her through; if not, the oars in a last pinch might save him. The gap was perhaps thirty yards in width and evidently formed the entrance to a deep water channel within the barrier. The water toward the shore on each side of this was apparently much shallower as told by its lighter colour.

With eyes still on the line of foam ahead, Starbuck reached out and pushed the girl gently to the bottom of the boat. Aubert, wakened now from his lethargy, excited by the sight of land and fearful of the coming attempt to reach it, squatted by the slight mast, pointing and gesticulating, talking rapidly in his own tongue.

"Lie close," cautioned Starbuck, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the Frenchman, "we're coming about."

As he spoke he shoved the tiller hard down and the light boat rounded to and swung up into the wind. Rocking on the crest of a huge sea that swept under her, the frail craft nearly swamped in the wash that came overside, and Starbuck, instantly seizing the bailer, tossed it to the Frenchman with instructions to bail for his life. The boat paid off slowly, and under a slackened sheet, heeled down and headed for the churning, wave-swept streak of water in which lay their only hope. Interminable seemed the approach. Aubert, roused to the fact that upon his efforts his life might depend, hurled water like a madman.

Near Starbuck's feet crouched Eleanor Channing, white, with staring eyes, her glance shifting from the reef ahead to the rigid figure at the tiller and sheet, whose set and hardened jaw showed the grimness of the coming effort. The roar of the

breakers, incessant and fearful, filled her brain with tumult. It was impossible to think or to speak. Luffing to the harder puffs, Starbuck eased the boat toward the point where a final dash must be made. Lacking a centreboard the skiff was making rapid leeway and unless he could reach the break on this tack he would have to stand out and try again, and the prospect of getting clear of the breakers under his lee was small indeed.

Edging nearer and nearer, he was now opposite the windward end of the gap and not more than fifty yards away. Fearing to be caught and hurled on the shoulder of the reef, he dared not work closer, and with a cry to the others, Starbuck let the boat's head fall off for the last run. Onward they swept, the great rollers bearing down upon them with white crests like the gnashing teeth of some elemental monster chortling over its certain prey, the blue green seas bearing them on with resistless grip.

Now, with headway and leeway nearly equal they were at the mouth of the gap. Fifty yards farther and they would be safe. Spray, hurled high in the air and drifted by the wind, blinded Starbuck with its stinging lash, as in the mighty heave and roar of waters the tiny craft struggled bravely on. Cataracts of green rose above them, curling, swirling, threatening to engulf but sinking with unaccom-

plished purpose in a spread of milky froth, only to rise again with a swinging heave and rush forward toward their plaything, the boat, that seemed a chip in a whirling maelstrom, tossed and wrenched by a titanic force.

Hurled by a billowing mountain of water, sinking in the trough until the bottom must surely be touched, rising again, up, up, with a sickening, tottering heave, on the foaming crest of a great sea, the wind caught the shaking sail in its rush, and though Starbuck, with the sheet in his hand ready to let go, was quick, the sudden onslaught of force hove the little skiff down till the water poured in over the gunwale. A cracking split, hardly to be heard amongst the babel of waters, and the frail mast went by the board. Relieved of the pressure, and steadied by an instant's calm in the trough, the dinghy righted, but uncontrolled now, wallowed broadside on. Starbuck seized an oar and pulled with all his strength. The stout ash broke like a splinter. Kept right side up by a miracle, the boat was carried, whirling and tossing, straight across the break toward the opposite end of the barrier, where the water, though quieter, was yet sending up its sheets of spray as it dashed over the submerged rock. With the other oar the sailor struggled manfully to gain way enough to clear the inner corner of the reef. The veins on his forehead

swelled and his knotted forearms were rigid as steel with the effort. Three fathoms, two fathoms; another would make it, but in the midst of a stroke the sea dropped out from under, and, whirled into the trough, the next wave caught the craft, flinging it on high and dropped it, crashing, on the rocks.

In an instant Starbuck, Aubert and the girl were in the water. While calm compared with the vortex outside, the sea here was full of eddies that caught at Starbuck's legs as he came up. Shaking the water from his eyes and looking about him he saw the black head of the Frenchman rise some yards away. Near the man floated an oar, which Starbuck saw him seize. At the same instant the girl's head bobbed up suddenly, almost within arm's length. He reached out and seized it by its streaming hair, shouting to Aubert as he did so in meaningless cries, half choked as the weight of the girl bore him down. A wave washed over them and as they emerged her strangling sputter awoke his stunned faculties. He struck out strongly with his free hand, not daring to shift his grip for fear she might be torn from him. Holding still by her hair over his shoulder he battled his way farther behind the reef, where the seas no longer broke angrily but rolled on in the shallower depth, shoreward. The Frenchman, swimming with his oar some distance away, was slowly nearing the beach. Starbuck

caught the bobbing of his black head in fleeting glimpses as he was lifted from the hollows to the height of the long waves. The water was shoaling rapidly and beneath him he could see the speckled red and yellow coral and the shells that formed the lagoon's bottom.

Swimming on his back now, he released his hold of the girl's hair, and raising her head out of the water on his breast, kicked his way onward. He felt himself weakening fast. His breath came in gasps as he blew the water from his mouth. The girl's weight was intolerable, dressed as she was in long, entangling skirts. He caught her at the waist with one hand and tried to rip the garment free. Failing, he lay back, fighting for air and resting as well as he could. Her limp stillness caused him to shake her until he remembered that it is easier to save an unconscious person than one who struggles in a panic of fear. So he began to swim again, slowly now, still on his back with her head on his breast. Driven by the long waves, he began to hear the roar of the combers as they climbed the beach and the sucking rush of the undertow as it rasped the riffle of shells and coral fragments in its receding torrent. Saving his strength until, when his feet touched bottom, he should need it most against this treacherous enemy, Starbuck let the waves sweep him on. At last he felt the ground beneath, but only for an

instant as a wave rushed by with green, curling comb that toppled, broke and spread into a swirl of foam. Again he touched, this time getting a grip on the sand only to be torn loose again.

Battered in the very midst of the breaking seas he fought with what strength was left to him to gain his feet. Failing, he turned on his breast and with the girl under his left arm, his hand strongly twisted in her floating hair, he struck out with feebling strokes. At last, after an eternity of heart breaking effort, he felt his feet touch firmly. Standing for an instant, clasping the girl in his arms, he pushed forward and was dragged to his knees by the tide of the undertow. The next wave caught and flung him with his senseless burden to the beach itself, receding and leaving him for an instant, and then returning in a final, impotent effort to reach what it had cast away. Starbuck staggered up toward the line of litter that marked the tide's flood. Reaching it he reeled, and with the winds of all the world roaring in his ears, his burden slipped from him and he sank beside it on the sand.

CHAPTER VI

MONSIEUR AUBERT EXPLAINS

THE world came back slowly to Starbuck and reluctantly he greeted the discomforts of returning consciousness. A dream of peace and rest that seemed like an eternity passed from him, leaving him weak and dizzy as with an effort he sat up. Close by, almost touching him, lay the girl as she had fallen, stretched face downward on the sand, her head turned a little to one side, her wet hair lying in a sodden mass along her back. The sight recalled Starbuck's senses to him in a flash. Seizing her shoulders he turned her body over, and ripping her collar loose, felt and listened to her heart. Faintly he could hear a murmur. He raised her quickly between clasped hands with her head hanging downward for a moment, then, laying her gently on her back over a hastily kicked up heap of sand, alternately drew her arms above her head and pressed them to her sides. Anxiously he watched. In a few moments the chest heaved in a gasping sigh, the eyelids lifted and she lay staring

upward, choking and struggling feebly to reach her mouth with the hands which he still held. Leaning over he spoke quick words, assuring her that she was safe. She shivered slightly in her wet garments and with a sigh closed her eyes and became still. Alarmed, he looked around him, realizing that she must be dried and warmed at once. Gathering her in his arms, he walked slowly up the beach to where a mass of rock made a break against the heavy wind, and here he laid her in the warm sun, himself trembling with fatigue.

An unutterable lassitude and longing for sleep possessed him and it was only by a determined effort that he fought off the desire.

Returning to the beach he looked about for some sign of Aubert. The last he had seen of the Frenchman was when he had turned on his back, less than half way to shore. The bobbing black head then was much nearer to the beach than he, and the man, evidently a good swimmer and aided by the support of the oar, must have reached shore safely. Starbuck walked to the spot where he and the girl had lain in the sand, and following west, came upon another track, that of a man on his hands and knees. As he was about to turn and follow it his eye caught something black, bobbing in the wash along the shore. Now it was hurled almost high and dry, but again, caught in the back wash, it was drawn

out of sight. He traversed the few yards to the spot at a run, and dashing waist deep into the surf, grasped the object and retreated safely. It was the nearly empty brandy bottle, which, floating when the boat struck, had been washed to land. Forgetting the sand prints he had intended to follow he hastened to the rock where the girl lay, and raising her on his knee, drew the cork with his teeth and poured the liquor slowly into her throat. With a convulsing cough she became awake.

"That's good," he said, still holding her with an arm beneath her shoulders. "Drink some more."

Without voicing a protest, she swallowed a mouthful of the burning stuff, which, though it scorched her throat raw, brought a genial glow to her chilled body, and blood to her blue lips. She hazily wondered if the Frenchman had brought the bottle ashore, and what Starbuck had done with him. Womanlike, she viewed her soaked garments in dismay. Her stockings fell about her ankles and her skirt was coming off. She put her hands up and feeling the sticky mass of wet hair with particles of sand adhering to it, abandoned the attempt to twist it about her head. Slight as these efforts were, they exhausted her surprisingly, and limp and weak, she leaned languidly against the rock. Starbuck stood looking at her.

"If I were you," he said, "I would lie down and sleep while I go and look for the Frenchman. He got ashore all right enough," he continued as he caught the ghost of an inquiry in her eyes. "I saw his tracks where he crawled up the beach. We are going to want food pretty quick," he went on, "but it's easy to find on this island. Hear that!" and he held up his hand with a grin, as a falling cocoanut hit the sand with a thump, not six yards away.

Picking it up he brought it to her.

"There's food," he said, still smiling, "better than ship's biscuit, and better than lots of other things that are better than those."

As he spoke, he took a knife from his pocket and commenced carving at the tough shell. After a moment he broke the nut impatiently against a rock and offered her one of the parts, together with his knife.

"Or no, wait," he exclaimed, "I'll get you a better spoon than that."

He walked down the beach and returned with a small shell, polished bright by the scour of the sea and sand. Offering it, he picked up the remainder of the nut, and with a shell of his own began scooping out the thick, creamy mass that adhered to it. Watching, she followed suit wearily, but brightening with pleasure as the cool, sweet substance

soothed her throat and mouth. Hungrily, almost eagerly she finished the shell.

"Another?" he inquired, looking up from his busy meal. "Lots of 'em all around. No limit on your appetite here," he said, as with mouth full, he waved his bit of shell toward the long line of cocoa palms that fringed the length of beach. "Get you fifty-seven varieties," he began again, "all flavours. As soon as I feel like climbing we'll have salad and wine and milk and other things."

The girl leaned back and closed her eyes.

"No," she murmured, "no, thank you. I am very tired, and I have heard that people should not eat much after being half starved."

"Why, that's so, too," he returned. "I never thought of that. Maybe we'd better go without dessert this time; and I'll tell the chef to have something fancy for dinner."

In spite of herself the girl smiled. "Perhaps Mr. Aubert is a chef in disguise," she said.

"Mister O'Bare, is it? I'd forgotten him. I'd better look him up, I guess, and see if a cocoanut meenoo is in his line. Likely he's made a pig of himself and is pretty sick by this time. Besides, he's got something I need in my business," said Starbuck, starting to his feet. "You lay quiet in the sun and dry your clothes while I take a look around."

She nodded and he walked away. Deadly weary himself, he dared not rest until he had discovered the whereabouts of the third member of the boat's party, who might, for all he knew, be planning a stealthy vengeance for the indignities and insults he had suffered. Starbuck hurried to the tracks in the sand and followed them cautiously to the line of the undergrowth. Suddenly he stopped short. The man he sought was lying peacefully on his back, asleep. Slowly Starbuck stooped and looked at him, then swiftly but carefully went through his pockets, one after another and withdrew with his booty. Sitting down on the beach, he sorted out a pocket knife with three blades, a pair of needles and a corkscrew in the handle, a small comb, a dollar and a half in nickels and silver and an open-faced gold watch. There was also a handkerchief, some letters and a small bunch of trunk keys. Returning the handkerchief and the letters to the sleeping man's coat, the sailor wrapped the remaining articles in his own handkerchief and slipped the parcel in his pocket.

Returning to the beach, he looked in the direction of the reef. The waves, long and regular, rolled in swiftly in unceasing succession, topped now by patches of white; new formed crests, born of the rising wind. But they were empty of that which he sought. No wreckage from the lost boat ap-

peared and he turned his gaze to the sand. The oar, which had aided Aubert to gain the shore, lay at the water's edge some distance below where the man had landed and Starbuck picked it up, noting with satisfaction that its copper tip was intact. Farther on he saw, floating in the water, the mast and sail with boom attached, and again dashing into the surf he secured it. Still farther on he found the pieces of the oar he had broken and the boathook. This seemed to be the extent of the flotsam and he made his way back, scanning the sea as he went.

Suddenly he cried out. There, courtesying on the waves was something dark and round, the water breaker, which, just buoyant enough to keep itself awash on the surface, was slowly being driven landward. Fifty yards away it bobbed, advanced and hesitated, until, after a seemingly never ending series of progressions, it came within reach. With this secured, Starbuck seemed satisfied with his search. The biscuit tin with its open top he knew must be at the bottom. There had been nothing else loose in the boat except the bedding, which would take longer to reach shore if it indeed came at all. Gathering together his prizes and heaping them all upon the sail, he hauled the little load to the rock, where the girl still lay with her head upon her arms and her hair spread out richly over her shoulders, drying in the sunshine.

The heat behind the rock out of the wind was disagreeably intense, and fearing an ill effect, the sailor stepped into the undergrowth, and with his knife cut several green leaves from a breadfruit tree. These he wove into a rough mat and placed it, supported by two sticks, against the rock above the sleeping girl. He made another shade for himself and under it flung his tired body.

The westering sun was dropping toward the horizon when Eleanor Channing awoke, refreshed and rested from the strain, the turmoil and the peril of the preceding hours. She noted with surprise the shelter that Starbuck had placed for her protection, divining its purpose at once though the rock now hid the blazing sun. Turning, she saw Starbuck himself, asleep in the shadow a few feet distant, and as she looked on him she was conscious of varying emotions. She was aware that he had saved her from death; that with danger to himself and with great courage, he had, unaided, brought her senseless across that stretch of broken water and had carried her to land, revived her and cared for her with gentleness and consideration.

But the fact that she owed him her life did not stand out so prominently as the thought of his kindness and care. Rough, unmannerly, abrupt, brutal perhaps he might be, but his treatment of her so far had been almost delicate, or at least unob-

trusive and considerate. Suddenly she noticed that the neck of her waist was torn far down and she flushed hotly as she remembered coming back to consciousness under his ministrations. Her hair, sticky with salt, was streaming uncomfortably about her, but opening a small bag she wore at her belt, now dry and puckered after its soaking, she took from it a comb and a few shell pins and proceeded to straighten and knot up her wild locks into some semblance of neatness. She stood up and looked about her.

A long, curving beach ran to the southwest around the point of the island, while to the eastward it made a straighter line, apparently for several miles. Down the length of it she could see no trace of the work of human hands, nothing but the sand, the sea and the long line of palms that edged the shore, coming down near to the water in some places and in others receding farther up the gentle slope. Evidently the island, or this side of it at least, was uninhabited.

Uninhabited! The thought struck her suddenly, as if it had never occurred to her before. Uninhabited! Cast away on a desert island! In the two days after the sinking of the steamer, while in the frail boat that was then all the world, her chief desire had been to reach land. She had not been troubled with doubts of its hospitality, nor had she

given much thought to the kind of land it was likely to be. If it was dry and stable it was enough. Vaguely she had thought of land as everywhere the same. The only coast she knew was the rugged shore of her New England, where at almost no point could one be cast away without meeting signs of occupation, and in all likelihood, the sympathetic and outstretched hands of comfortable country-folk, waiting to offer succor to seafarers in distress.

To be sure, there was nothing frightful in a shore of waving palms, whose God-given usefulness to the poor castaway she had gratefully seen illustrated by the cocoanut, but as she stood alone on the beach, gazing first one way and then another, it was borne in swiftly upon her that she was out of her world; that friends, everything in life that she held dear were gone, perhaps for ever, and that she, Eleanor Channing, was here on an unknown, and for all she knew, uncharted bit of sand, imprisoned and resourceless except through her own efforts, and in the doubtful companionship of a sailor and a drunken foreigner. Hot, stinging tears rushed to her eyes, as helpless, hungry, her clothes in shreds, her skin burning under the glare of the sun, she stood, a pitiful figure of youth and distress, alone on this wild refuge in the midst of a desert of waters.

How would these men act toward her? How

could she protect herself? How long would it be before a ship appeared to take her away? What should she do for clothes? As the last of the series of questions flitted through her mind she glanced downward at her draggled skirt. Her shoes, low ones, and none too stout at best, had been soaked until the leather had turned to a sort of greenish pulp, and drying, had cracked and split in half a dozen places. Even now the sand forced itself into the holes and hurt her when she stepped. The beach was formed of shells and coral fragments, mixed and ground together by the force of wind and sea, and the sharp-edged particles cut mercilessly. Suddenly she stopped as she saw before her the track in the sand which Starbuck had described. It gave her a distinct sensation, such as Crusoe may have felt at the sight of the footprint. She looked up in the direction of the trail, and there, at the edge of the undergrowth stood Aubert. As she looked he stepped forward out of the shadow of the trees and approached.

"Good evening," he said in English. "I am most glad to see that you have recovered. Was it not terrible? And my *mal de mer!* It is quite vanished and I am at last myself again."

Extraordinarily different was the manner of this man from him whom she remembered as a wretched creature moaning in the bottom of the boat, with

blood flowing from his bruised mouth, mumbling over crumbs of a ship's biscuit. How he had reached the shore she did not know, but she was aware that he had not assisted at her own rescue. However, she was not prepared to condemn him for this, at least unheard, and under the circumstances she thought it well to make friends with him, for, although he had presented himself hitherto in a most unfavourable light, he now seemed to have the bearing and manners of returning decency.

"And you, Monsieur Aubert, I see that you are none the worse for your adventure. I am glad that we all were so fortunate as to reach land alive."

"Ah, Mademoiselle," he broke in, "you know my name. I am fortunate to have your interest." He spoke with a very little accent, though he chose his words at times with the lack of accuracy in English idiom that is common to most men of his race. His face grew a thought serious.

"I am desolated," he said, "at the opinion you must have of me. I beg, Mademoiselle Channing, that you will believe me when I say that it was not I, myself, who lay in that terrible boat, but another; a creature driven insane with the horrible *mal de mer,* suffering tortures inexpressible from first to last. It is always so," he explained volubly. "Whenever I am forced to go in the small boat it is so. My sickness begins at once and my head

whirls until my brain becomes extinguished with the suffering, and then I am not myself, Henri Aubert, but a beast. Ah, Mademoiselle, what I suffered in that boat none shall ever know, and how I was treated by that officer of the ship! There was no need, Mademoiselle, no need to treat me so, when I could not rise and defend myself. But that is past, is it not? It shall be forgotten like a dream, a nightmare, that one shudders to remember. Is it not so? And now that we are here together we will be friends, yes? And I will even forgive the officer his blow that we may exist in peace until a ship comes for us."

Eleanor Channing listened to this remarkable explanation with amazement. That the sea had any such effect upon Aubert she could hardly believe, yet she knew that some people were driven almost to insanity by the ocean malady and was more inclined to accept his statement on this account. His great change in appearance suggested that there might be some truth in his words, and, after all, what difference did it make so long as he gave her the respect he now showed?

"There is one thing, Mademoiselle, that it is necessary for me to tell you," said Aubert, glancing about and speaking quietly as he came closer to her. "It is with regret that I speak but it is best that you should be warned. It is about the officer of the

ship, he whom you believe to be your friend and protector. Not all the time in that miserable boat was I mad with my illness. I had intervals of moments when my reason returned and I saw and heard and felt again. One of these blessed occasions came last night while you were sleeping. I awoke from my horrible stupor and saw you not. At first I had a great fear that you had fallen into the sea, but no, it was your form I saw in the bottom of the boat. The officer was sitting in the stern. He was bending down over you. He reached out his hand and touched you. The look in his eyes was terrifying and I could not bear it that harm should befall. As he leaned down I leaped to your defence. I heard you scream, cry out in fear, and I raised my hand to strike when he felled me with one terrible blow. Ah, Mademoiselle, it was truly an evil moment. He struck me here, on the mouth, and I, weak with my indisposition, fell back nearly senseless. Then my illness returned fourfold and I was very sick and knew no more. This, Mademoiselle, I consider it my duty as a man of honour to tell you, that you may be advised."

"Monsieur Aubert!" cried the girl, horror-struck as she realized the import of the Frenchman's words, "is this the truth you are speaking? I cannot believe it. This man has shown me nothing but respect. He is not a gentleman, perhaps, but he

has acted as an honourable man should act toward a woman who is alone and helpless. I cannot believe this."

"Yet it is the truth," replied the Frenchman. "You were sleeping. I saw all."

In a flash the situation came back. She remembered the touch that had awakened her, the blow, and the story that Starbuck had told. She remembered also his suggestion that she should rest against him, and which she had declined in silence. Could it be that Aubert was speaking the truth?

"And now," spoke Aubert again, "now that I have told you this, I beg that you will not accuse him of it. If we three are alone upon this land we must have peace. We must protect each other. I shall, with your permission, Mademoiselle, or perhaps without it, make it my duty to guard you and watch over you. I am not a match for the other in brute strength. No, I am not a brute, but I am a man, Mademoiselle, and my life shall be forfeit before harm comes to you."

With a bow the Frenchman paused, and with a manner almost debonair, in strange contrast to his battered appearance, offered his escort to a stream of water, which he said he had found not far distant and which flowed, as he described it, through a valley of surpassing loveliness. Half willingly she turned to follow, for the thought of

cool, fresh water was most alluring, but as she did so she stopped short at the sight of Starbuck coming along the beach.

With a swinging stride he rapidly approached, and Aubert stepped aside to let him pass. Starbuck gave the Frenchman a look of passing contempt and stopped.

"I missed you when I awoke," he said, "and came in search. I was also going to look for water. There should be a brook here somewhere, opposite the break in the reef, and a cool drink would not be the worst thing in the world."

The Frenchman broke in eagerly.

"I have found water, Monsieur," he said. "It is just here. Permit me to show you."

Starbuck paused and regarded the man with amazement. That the crawling, groaning creature, who had lain, from one cause or another, throughout the voyage of the dinghy like a man half dead, should now be on his two feet, apparently calm, with speech on his tongue and confidence in his tone, was a surprise that almost startled him.

"And when," he said, looking Aubert over from head to foot, "did you come to life?"

There was a sneer in the tone that made the Frenchman colour.

"Sir," he said, "I have just explained to this lady that I was not responsible for my deportment

in that terrible time when we were in that boat. I have been ill, Monsieur, but now that I am on the firm earth once more, I am myself again."

To Starbuck he now explained the nature of his idiosyncrasy against small boats, declaring with fervour that he had practically been out of his mind from the time the ship went down until he was washed up, half dead, on the shores of this island. Starbuck heard him through. It was plain that he did not believe a word.

However, he said little. He was willing to let the past record of Aubert remain closed, for he recognized in the man's attempt to excuse himself, merely a desire to save his face before a woman.

"Well, Mr. O'Bare," drawled Starbuck, fixing him with a sarcastic eye, "if I were you I would stay on this island for the rest of my natural life before I would risk my intellect in a boat again."

The brook, which tumbled its joyful way down to the sea from the height of the land, flowed through a valley that was delightful with the shade of huge palms near the shore, and breadfruits and plantains farther inland. The party of three explored, for a short distance, the flower-strewn glade, Starbuck, with the air of a man familiar with such scenes, pointing out the various trees and plants and calling them by name. The little stream, cool

from the shadowed depths of the forest was eagerly drunk from, Starbuck making two hasty cups from the halves of a cocoa shell. The first sip of good water was a delight and the three drank repeatedly, washing down the sweet contents of ripe nuts, which they all ate with a relish.

Then Starbuck called a council. As an officer of the ship, he said, he believed it to be his duty to protect its passengers and to serve them until they were safe again, or at least back in civilization. So far as he knew, this was an uninhabited island, a fact that he considered strange in the light of its size and fertility. Of course, on the other side there might be a native village, but here there were no signs of occupation, either past or present. He stated that he was familiar with many of the fruits of this latitude, having visited a number of similar islands during his life at sea. There was no danger, he told them, from wild beasts for there was none. Rats might be plentiful, he said, but were scarcely to be feared. Pigs were sometimes raised by the natives and roamed at will through the forests, but he had so far seen no signs of them.

He explained at length the geographical position of the island as he believed it to be, and, while he held out no false hopes of being speedily taken off, he declared that such an island would not go for long without a visit from some of the German

traders, who carried on the traffic of the Caroline sea.

For the present, he proposed that they should make an inventory of all the articles they possessed and turn all those of use into the common treasury, to be used by any of them when needed, but to be always replaced when they had served their turn. He produced the things he had taken from the Frenchman's pockets, still tied in his handkerchief, which Miss Channing at once recognized by its green striped border, but unblushingly he offered not the slightest explanation of how he had obtained them, nor did the Frenchman ask one. She noticed this but did not comment on it, though she thought it strange that Aubert should have permitted himself to be robbed in this high-handed manner without a protest.

Now the shadows in the valley were deepening and Starbuck bestirred himself to find a place to sleep. With a few sticks of hibiscus wood, and with plantain and breadfruit leaves for a thatch, he constructed a rough sort of wigwam, which he presented to Miss Channing as her temporary quarters. Inside he placed a quantity of grass and invited her to enter.

The fast falling night closed in upon them, warm, starlit and moonless. The wash of the waves gave a steady undertone through the trees, the few birds

ceased calling and a hush fell on the valley. The girl retired to her shelter, while the two men made their couches in the open at a little distance. Aubert was soon sleeping, but Starbuck sat at the foot of a tree, his back against it, waiting through the long silent hours for the new day.

CHAPTER VII

TWO MEN AND A WOMAN

As he sat with arms folded and head thrown back, gazing up at the rift of azure sky that showed through the waving tops of the palms, Starbuck thought of the girl in the frail shelter he had built for her. He could hear her, now and then, as she turned restlessly on her couch of grass, and he wondered whether she slept, or whether, wearied in body but preternaturally alert in mind, she was lying there thinking of the coming days and weeks; for Starbuck did not disguise the fact from himself, though he tried to keep it from the others, that it might be a long time before relief came.

During the dark hours he set himself to formulate some sort of plan whereby this little community of three strangely assorted souls could best live at peace with one another. The girl he knew to be naturally courageous, but he could readily see that she was rapidly letting herself fall into a state of nervousness and apprehension. Hitherto her accept-

ance of whatever services he had rendered her had been marked by reserve of manner, plainly intended to keep him at a distance. As to Aubert's status with her he had not seen enough to judge, but he knew that she must have formed a thoroughly poor opinion of him while in the boat, and the man's queer story of delirium could hardly have been convincing. She had seemed to accept it, he believed, as he had himself, for the sake of whatever harmony was possible in their enforced companionship.

He admitted to himself that he admired the girl for the steady nerve she had displayed, but as to whether she thought well or ill of him, he had not had time to ponder. To the strictly personal side of the future days of enforced island residence, he had given little thought. As for the Frenchman, Starbuck had formed a definite opinion of him. The man was a coward. He was one of those who pose and swagger, telling of large things he has done and of the still greater that he expects to do; a man, who, when danger is past, comes forward with a smile, belittling the peril, offering excuses for his own conduct and trusting to his amiability and the sympathy of the onlookers to rehabilitate him. He would bear watching, thought the sailor, not because his sense of insult would permit him to go into physical danger for its avenging, but be-

cause he was certain to attempt to insinuate himself into the good graces of Miss Channing and thus possibly cause a passive mutiny in the camp against his own judgment and authority, which he was of no mind to relinquish.

Work and plenty of it, decided Starbuck, must be the daily portion of each one of the trio. On the long, dull days at sea in his younger years, when the calm of the doldrums bred a pestilence of discontent among the crew, work had been the sovereign remedy of the skipper and was invariably efficacious. Men who would have rebelled against the food served out to them if allowed to be idle, ate with nothing worse than a growl when hard at work. Occupation, something to keep the hands busy as well as the mind, was the great alleviator in time of trouble. And occupation they should have.

His thoughts turned to the boat, which was now lying with her side stove in at the bottom of the reef, where he knew the water might be fifteen fathoms deep. Would it be possible to raise and patch her? If this island, as yet unexplored, should prove as he believed, uninhabited, there must be others not too far away that might be reached, and in settled weather, with the dinghy made seaworthy and well provisioned, such a voyage would be practicable. However, this was a measure only to be tried after a reasonable amount of waiting for a

ship, and Starbuck gave himself up to plans for the coming day. Some kind of more or less permanent shelter was imperative. The rainy season was fast approaching, as told by the restless shifting of the winds, and a stock of provisions must at once be laid in against possible illness or mishap. The island must be explored for the purpose of finding some hint as to its history, and in the hope that, if at this time unpeopled, some stray articles of usefulness might have been left behind.

Weary, the man's thoughts grew less clear, and, as the hour of dawn approached, his head drooped toward his breast and he slumbered.

When Eleanor Channing retired to her leafy bower, as Starbuck surmised, it was not to sleep. The rustling of the grass, the unaccustomed hardness of the bed, the possibility of crawling insects, and the noises of the night, after the first moments of forced composure, had driven sleep far from her busy brain. She turned on this side and on that; she sat up and tried to better arrange her couch, and finally, failing in each attempt at comfort, threw herself down to wait for the light.

Lying there, she could hear the Frenchman's heavy breathing a few yards away. She could even see his form vaguely in a lighter patch under the stars. Starbuck she could neither see nor hear. She recalled the Frenchman's words of the after-

noon. The darkness and the mystery of the island night, with its whisperings and its rustlings, wrought a fear in her that they might be true, though what calm reason she could muster rebuked her for the evil in her thoughts. Still, here were two men and a woman, alone, away from all the restraints of civilization, their impulses quickened only by the laws of nature or the promptings of their own consciences. That they might struggle finally to possess her was perfectly possible. How soon the contest would come she could not foresee, but that some sort of supremacy must be established she dared not doubt. She knew enough of the world not to delude herself that a man such as Starbuck had shown himself could indefinitely refrain from exhibiting an interest in her. His passions must some time leap to the surface and sweep away the habit of duty that now seemed so strong in him. The other was also a man, not so strong, not so elemental, but he was at least a male, and, taken doubtless from an environment of worldly indulgence, he would make his fight, however feeble it might be, for the winning of the prize.

Facing such a problem as this, the girl's native courage was sorely tried. Whether it would not be better to die when the time came, she hardly considered. The danger, though so real, seemed so almost mythical in its present remoteness, that she

could not bring herself to think of it as an actuality. She must play for time, she told herself. She must pretend to be all things to each of these men, meeting each in a spirit of courage, never weakening nor apparently seeing beyond the commonplaces of existence. A steady hand and a clear, discerning mind that never showed the white feather would go far, she thought, if only the time were not too long. A week, possibly a month, would be the duration of her imprisonment and for this space she believed herself able to hold at arm's length anything short of sheer physical force.

She thought of the man to whom she was engaged to be married. How would he accept her in the knowledge of her plight? How would his family accept her, those proud, cold aristocrats of New England, the Brahmin caste of America, whose traditions showed no taint of vulgar adventure, whose women were statuesque figures of propriety and whose men models of icy discretion? Already she felt herself smirched by her position, by her very thoughts, unworthy again to enter into their frigid circle of conventionality.

Like the tamer of lions, her safety lay in the pretence of courage. She must face all things with calmness, never resenting friendliness, never encouraging familiarity, always ready to share discomforts and dangers as a man would be. Like

the lion's master, the worst she had to fear was fear itself.

With the situation, as she saw it, analyzed to its lowest terms, Eleanor Channing's mind lost its tension, and like the man asleep at the foot of the tree, she sank slowly into a depth of unconsciousness that before the day broke was profound.

The rising of the sun awoke Starbuck. He stretched his arms and yawned noisily, and without calling the Frenchman or the girl, he rose, and shaking the dew from his clothes as he walked, went to the stream for a drink and a wash. Refreshed by the cool water, he stepped quietly down to the beach and scanned the sea and shore. The wind had fallen before sunrise and the lagoon inside the reef was quiet as a pond, though its surface still undulated with the rollers that swept in from the reef, where the seas still broke noisily, sending up their sheets of spray, turned to dazzling whiteness by the sun.

The first thing Starbuck did was to make a fire. With no matches nor flint and steel there was but one way, and with a sailor's knowledge of many strange lands, he set about it in the ancient island fashion. Choosing a half decayed stem of hibiscus he tore off the smaller end, and with his knife, whittled this carefully to a point. Laying the larger piece against a rock, he bestrode it, and selecting

a dry and partly rotten spot, began to rub. Soon a groove was worn in the soft wood, and as he worked faster the decayed particles were ground to a fine powder that was pushed into a little heap at the farther end. He increased the speed of his strokes, his body shaking with the violence of movement, until all at once a thin, fine spiral of smoke curled up. With the sweat pouring from his face, empurpled by his exertions, he worked with lightning strokes, and at last, when human muscles could move no faster, he suddenly stopped and pressed the point of his smoking stick hard into the cavity he had worn. A breathless instant, and the tiny particles glowed, incandescent, elemental fire, born of the energy of one man's body.

"Bravo!"

Instantly he looked up to see, fresh and glowing from her visit to the brook, the girl, who stood above him at the edge of the trees smiling her good morning.

"How delightfully primitive!" she said, as she stepped down upon the beach. "You look like a strong man who has just run a race," and she could have bitten her tongue the next instant as she thought of the retort he might make to the quotation.

But he did not. Intent on his fire, he scarcely more than nodded a welcome as he busily piled dry

twigs, one by one on the tiny blaze, which grew and throve under his hand.

"It's queer," he said at last, as he sat back to mop his forehead, and eyed with satisfaction the now vigorous flames, "it's mighty queer that we humans aren't happy without a fire. Here we are in the midst of the greatest fruit country in the world, where things to eat are ready to drop into our mouths, and yet we must have a fire and cook something. What?" he echoed, as he caught the girl's look of inquiry. "Well, roasted breadfruit isn't a bad breakfast, and baked yams make a bully good side dish. The only thing we lack is coffee, but we can make out on a hot morning with a cocoanut cocktail as an appetizer. You never ate a well cooked breadfruit?" he questioned, as he heaped fuel on the blaze until it leaped alive into the still morning air. "Well, you're going to taste something nearly as good as your native Boston dish."

As he spoke he rimmed the glowing heap with stones and buried others deep in the heart of the blaze.

"Now," he said, turning to her, "if you'll keep that going with this dry stuff, I'll go and pick the breakfast. One, two, three. Our Parisian friend, who isn't up yet, I suppose, will take rolls and coffee, merely, with an absinthe frappe as an eye opener. Hey, you there, Monseer O'Bare," he

called loudly up the valley. "Your valay hasn't come home yet and you'll have to 'do' for yourself this morning. Get up!" he finished, his tone changing from one of half good-natured banter to a note of command.

He resumed the placing of the stones to heat, the girl watching him with interest.

"You seem a very capable sort of person," she said at length, as he finished to his satisfaction. "I should quite like to know you, I think. I am Eleanor Channing, and now," she finished with a smile, "you have the advantage of me."

Starbuck stared. It had never occurred to him that she did not know his name.

"That's one on me," he admitted with a laugh. "Days and nights in a boat together and didn't even know who was sailing you. Perhaps I'd better give our mutual friend my card and then we can be what you call properly introduced."

But smiling, she shook her head.

"I'd much rather hear it from you. Besides, breakfast like this is hardly a formal function, you know."

"Well," he said slowly, "if you will have it, it is Starbuck, John Starbuck, and very much at your service."

John Starbuck. It was a solid, substantial name with a good New England twang to it.

"Why," she exclaimed, "you must be from Massachusetts. Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard?"

"Nantucket," he answered quickly. "I was born on Nantucket. My mother's name was Macy and her mother was a Coffin, but I've been knocking about this round old world so long," he added, she thought a bit wistfully, as he stood gazing off seaward, "that I don't know as I can claim now to hail from much of anywhere."

"Oh, once a Yankee for ever a Yankee, you never can change," she said lightly. "I'm glad your name is Starbuck. It sounds so square and so, well, so sensible. It fits you, I think."

Starbuck had never analyzed his feeling for his name other than to be in a way proud to bear it as that of a line of sailors and shipmasters of the old school, who had made New Bedford the oiliest port in the world in the days when voyages were measured by barrels, and men by the length of the long dart throw. Her approval pleased him.

Aubert's appearance, gingerly stepping through the undergrowth, put an end to the subject and Starbuck looked quizzically at the advancing figure. The Frenchman had evidently been at some pains with his toilet. His coat was brushed free from grass and leaves, his shirt cuffs turned back to hide their soiled edges, and he now beckoned Starbuck to come to him.

"Pardon, Monsieur," he said, when the sailor was near enough to catch his low tone, "but my little comb that I always carry. It would be a convenience — "

"Yes," Starbuck admitted, with a glance at the tousled black head, and the disordered moustache and imperial, "and a shave wouldn't be a bad thing, either, if we had some soap and a razor."

"Look, *voici!*" cried Aubert, as he reached into his inside waistcoat pocket. "See, the genii grants your wish, almost as it is uttered," and as he spoke he drew out a black case containing the wished for article. Starbuck took it in some surprise for he thought he had searched the man thoroughly.

"Here's your comb," he said, handing it to him from the packet, which he had opened. "I'll try the shaving tool after breakfast. We'll take turns with it, every other day, and give it to Miss Channing between whiles for safe keeping."

"*Bien,*" said the Frenchman shortly, "I am satisfied."

While the stones in the fire were heating, Starbuck walked back into the valley and soon returned bearing several green breadfruit. They were peculiar, egg-shaped things with knobby green skins covering a thin rind and were about as large as a citron. He carried also a number of large leaves, in which he proceeded to wrap the fruit one by one.

Scooping a hole in the heart of the fire and raking the embers to one side, he placed the parcels in the cavity and covered them with the hot ashes, heaping the smaller stones on these and smothering the whole with earth. Picking up one of the burning brands, he carefully kindled a new fire at a little distance and called to Miss Channing, who had been watching these primitive preparations for breakfast with interest.

"Who was it that kept their lamps lighted for a thousand years or so?" he asked her over his shoulder.

"The vestal virgins, do you mean?"

"That's it, I reckon. Now I want you to consider yourself one of those same young women who has wandered from her own fireside, and keep a little blaze going just here."

"And for a thousand years?"

"Well, maybe it won't be quite that long, but it quite likely will seem so; anyhow, enough to give some character to the part. It's hot work making fire by the prehistoric method as you saw this morning, and it will be easier to keep it. Monseer," he suddenly called to Aubert, who had sat down at the foot of a nearby palm and was finishing his toilet with the comb Starbuck had returned to him. He looked up.

"Just slip along the beach there and bring back

some of those green cocoanuts the wind brought down last night, and strip the husks off. I'll be back in time for breakfast," he added, and without more words swung off with a long stride up the beach toward the rock, behind which they had found their first shelter on the day before.

The girl watched him as he strode away, with his seamanlike swing of the arms and body, graceful, strong, alert. In his white shirt and blue trousers and with his head bare to the morning breeze, he was good to look upon, and Eleanor Channing could not but admit that the buoyant figure, with its utter lack of pose or mannerism fitted well with the stage setting of palm and sea and sky.

Slowly she turned her attention again to the fire, dragging some of the larger pieces of wood from a little distance and heaping them up nearby until she had accumulated a sizable pile. Warm with physical exercise, flushed, and panting a little, she stood back, rubbing her reddened palms and looking with some pride at her work. As she stood, wondering why she had found herself hoping to win a word of approval from a sailorman, who ordered her about as if she were one of his own deckhands, Aubert suddenly stood beside her, dropping an armful of nuts at her feet. His labour had not disarranged the carefully roached hair or the

twisted ends of his moustache, and as he struck an attitude and shrugged, with his thumbs out and his palms up, she could think of nothing but a little French barber. All he lacked was the comb stuck behind his ear.

"And Ma'm'selle, I hope that she rested quite well?"

"Yes, thank you; and you?" she continued, for the want of something better to say, "I am sure you did. I heard you quite plainly."

"Ah, that is cruel, Ma'm'selle. I was fatigued past all words. It is not often that I sleep such a sleep. From night until morning I knew nothing. And I dreamed, ah! such dreams, that I was not sorry. I was again in my dear Paris, and it was a spring evening along the Champs Elysśes. The hundreds and thousands of lamps among the trees and in the gardens twinkled and the gay voices of men and women came to me. The orchestra at Des Ambassadeurs one could just hear, above the whirr of the passing automobiles and the click, click of the cab horses. And under a lamp I met, whom do you think, Ma'm'selle? Who but yourself, and you were —"

"Your dream is very interesting, no doubt, Monsieur Aubert," interrupted Miss Channing hastily, "but I smell something. Do you suppose the breakfast is burning? Ought we to look?"

To her relief, Starbuck now made his appearance, dragging behind him the sailcloth and the other articles which he had picked up along the shore; the poor little collection, which, with what they personally had in their pockets, represented their total wealth. There was the broken mast of the boat, with its boom, sail and fittings; one whole oar; one broken one; one boathook, one water keg and one empty brandy bottle. As this last came into view Miss Channing glanced at Aubert. She saw him eye it eagerly and caught the look of disappointment that crossed his face when he saw its condition. Less than ever did she believe his story.

Starbuck dumped his load on the sand and eyed it with some satisfaction.

"That isn't as much as Mr. Crusoe had, is it?" he said, "nor yet the ship's cargo that the poor Swiss Family struggled along with. But for three intelligent people it will do very well, I'm thinking."

Digging open the pile under which the breadfruit lay, without more ado Starbuck opened the leaf-bound parcels and laid before the waiting ones the fragrant, steaming contents. Cracking the rind of one of the fruits, the thin shell dropped away, exposing the white, pulpy contents.

Miss Channing, with a shell for a spoon, was the first to taste.

"Delicious," she cried as she hungrily dipped a

second mouthful. "Why, it's like nothing I ever ate before, and so much better than most breakfast foods."

Starbuck was busy with the corkscrew attachment of Aubert's knife, with which he bored out one of the little black plugs in the ends of three cocoanuts, and after punching other holes in their sides, he passed two of them to the others. They saw him place his lips to the end, and take a long draught. Imitating him, the girl gave a cry of surprise and hastily repeated the operation.

"And this is the milk in the cocoanut!" she exclaimed; "it really is the most refreshing drink I ever had. Why should any one waste time on the ancient mystery of how it got there, when one can quench one's thirst so delightfully?"

"These are not the best, though," said Starbuck critically, "they've been on the ground for several hours. A native would turn up his nose, and climb the tree for a fresh one."

Breakfast over, the girl half expected to hear an order to wash the dishes, as she might have, had there been such things, but the remains were burned and the beach left clean.

"Now," said Starbuck, briskly, "there's a lot of work to do. The first thing is to set our signal of distress on the top of the hill back of us, and to explore the island far enough to find out if there is a

native village anywhere on the other side. After that, we'll build something for Miss Channing to call her private residence. Aubert, it's you for the tall timber. Take this knife and whittle off all the straight trees you come to that are the thickness of your ankle. I wish we had an axe and we'd make you a real lumber jack. Miss Channing, if you're a mountain climber, you can come with me and have the honour of hauling up the first flag on the island of — what? Name it, Miss, you were the discoverer and you must be its sponsor."

Called on suddenly for a name, Eleanor Channing was caught somewhat off her guard, but perhaps, had she stopped to think, she could have done no better.

"Starbuck Island," was her quick decision and Starbuck himself, on whom this unexpected and personal honour had fallen, had no time to demur before she cried:

"Starbuck Island, in honour of the man who made it possible for it to be named at all."

And so it stood.

"But what are we to do for a flag?" asked the girl, in doubt as to what he had planned to use that might be seen any distance at sea.

"A piece of luck," answered Starbuck. "When I was after this bit of plunder, I saw, washing just on the edge of the beach, those bedclothes from

the boat. There's the two sheets, and a blanket with red stripes on the ends. It's light and it ought to fly in the breeze we get here."

He went and got it from a bush where it hung drying and spread it out before her. The red bars at top and bottom showed brilliantly against a yellowish ground.

"Splendid," she cried, "only the ships that see it will think it's a Spanish flag and they may not come near us."

"All the better," retorted the sailor. "If they're German ships, as most of 'em are that trade in these waters, they'd be pretty likely to want to know who the grandees are who have jumped their claim."

Starbuck busied himself overhauling the small ropes that had formed the running rigging of the mast and sail, and when he had freed them, found himself with sufficient line for halyards. Next he took two large shells from the beach that fitted closely over one another. In these he placed a few live coals from the fire and handed them to the girl. Taking up the boathook he announced himself ready for exploration and adventure.

For the first time it occurred to her, that, should she go with him, she would be placing herself in a position she had been warned against. Flushing slightly, she hesitated.

"I think if this is to be a journey of exploration,

Monsieur Aubert should go with us," she demurred. "And certainly he should be present when we raise our flag of occupation. Three cheers by only one cheerer would be a poor sort of salute, it seems to me, for such a standard."

Starbuck, while he did not suspect the real reason, was of no mind to have his first suggestion as to the day's work disregarded, and stoutly held to the original plan. The sticks for the hut must be cut, he said, and they might be gone several hours; also, the day was advancing and the night fell early in the tropics. Aubert, anxious to avoid the heavy work he had been set to do, attempted to enter the little controversy, but the look in Starbuck's eye told him sternly not to interfere, and, since the girl could not well refuse outright, the sailor had his way.

They started up the valley, taking the course of the stream, which bubbled musically over the rocks and fallen tree trunks to where it brawled out over the beach. At first the way was fairly clear, but soon the undergrowth became thicker and the air closer and warmer. Away from the sea breeze, hemmed in on all sides by the heavy shade, where a few bright plumed birds scaled overhead with startled cries, Eleanor Channing found herself in a new world. The rank, lush greenery of the tropics, the myriads of flowering plants, the clinging ten-

drils of the vines that climbed and wound their way around the tree trunks, were all strange to her, and though the heat of exercise caused discomfort, she began to enjoy the experience.

Starbuck went ahead, often beating a path for her through the thickest of the growth and extending a helping hand where rocks impeded her progress. He did not talk much, and as they ascended sharply she was too far out of breath to attempt conversation. Once a canebrake seemed to offer an impenetrable barrier but by main strength Starbuck forced a passage for her and himself, which closed up almost as quickly as it was made. Safely through this, the forest became more open, and they could see the slope well ahead. The hardest part of their climb, however, was to come. From this point the peak of the hill ran up steeply and in spots the ground was almost bare, covered with grayish rock that looked like slag from a blast furnace.

"Lava," said Starbuck, as he extended the boathook to help her up an acclivity. "This island is, or has been, an active volcano, and that not so very long ago. See, there are ashes under your foot that look as if they had just fallen there."

Rather fearing to step suddenly into an open fissure, the girl climbed gingerly on, the sharp edges of the slag cutting her shoes sadly, though she did not complain. Higher they went, till, glancing

back, they caught glimpses of the sea below, shining in its vast expanse, seemingly still as a great lake. While she stopped to rest, Starbuck kept on, shinning up the steep hillside like a goat, sometimes on all fours, and as she turned again to the ascent, she heard him give a shout and hurried her steps until she could see him standing on a point of stiffened lava, waving his hand to her. It was the top.

CHAPTER VIII

STARBUCK ISLAND

THERE was no definite crater, but rather a broad depression, rimmed about with rock, that stood in fantastic shapes and ridges as if left there, unfinished, by careless workmen. No smoke was visible, but in the crevices near the bottom of the pit a light vapour arose that smelled strongly of sulphur. On the farther side of the basin was a great rift in its edge as if scooped out by a Titan's hand, and out of this, growing broader as it descended, was a frozen stream of lava, that had mowed a path straight to the water on the island's south side.

Starbuck helped the girl to a place beside him on the highest pinnacle of rock, where there was an uninterrupted view in every direction. Perhaps not above four hundred feet in height, the island, they could see, was nearly elliptical in shape, with its length running almost east and west. They saw the surrounding coral reef, with its fringe of milk-white breakers on the north and west, and lying like a dark shadow off the leeward shore. The water of the enclosed lagoon, with its brilliant shades of

blue and green, was like an iridescent mirror, and over all was the glowing blue of the sky, with the sun like a brazen bowl, riding in the southeast. No other island was in sight.

While the girl stood gazing at the beauty of the panorama, Starbuck leaped down, and descending a short distance, twisted off the stem of a tall, straight young tree, from which he stripped the branches. Opening the shells, which the girl had carried, he blew the coals into life and started a small fire. Into this he thrust the metal point of the boathook, while the girl, from her perch, looked on puzzled.

Testing its heat from time to time, at last Starbuck placed the dull, red point at the end of the pole and burnt a smooth, round hole through to the other side. Reeving the halyards through it, he stepped it in a crevice on the peak of rock, wedging it with other smaller pieces of broken slag, which he drove with his heel to support the butt. This done he unwound from his waist the ship's blanket he had brought and bent it firmly by two corners to the halyards.

"Now, Your Excellency," he cried, as he drew up in mock salute, "we are ready for the christening. Are you still decided on the name?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "that must be the name, of course; you could not expect me to name it for myself, could you?"

Starbuck felt a little flick of satisfaction as he noted that the Frenchman was forgotten, or ignored.

"All right then, here goes," and the blanket, rolled in a tight ball, sailor fashion, began slowly to climb the pole.

"Stop, stop," she cried in dismay. "What am I to say? What words does one use when one names a new land?"

Starbuck looked blank.

"I'm sure I don't know," he said in perplexity, "but," brightening, "when you crack a bottle on a ship's stem, you say, 'I christen thee So-and-So.'"

"I suppose that will have to do," replied the girl, somewhat doubtful, "but, after all, it's an island in the sea, and not such a steady going one at that, judging by what we've seen up here."

The ball ascended quickly to the top of the staff, and Starbuck, giving the halyards into the girl's hands, told her which one to pull as she spoke the words.

"I christen thee Starbuck Island," she cried. With a jerk the ball unrolled, and the blanket flag, with its stripes of red on either end, broke out free to the breeze, a symbol of hope for their deliverance.

"Now three cheers," said Starbuck, "and the ceremony's over."

"No," objected the girl, "you see there is no

one to cheer. I cannot. I am the dignified sponsor for a new land; and you cannot, for you are the much affected recipient of a great honour and you should be bowing your thanks to the people who gave it to you, not cheering like a schoolboy."

"Then I bow," responded Starbuck, gravely bending his bare head, but when he raised it again the girl had hopped down beside him, and was pointing to a break in the opposite wall of the basin.

"Come, we mustn't waste time any longer," she said. "We must explore our domain."

Leading the way, Starbuck crossed the crater, the girl behind, lifting her short skirt in some trepidation as the smell of sulphur rasped her lungs. They hurried to the edge and looked down where the broad flow of lava extended uninterruptedly to the base of the hill and even across the white beach into the sea.

"I'll bet there was some sizzling when that struck the Pacific," was Starbuck's comment as he handed the girl the boathook to steady her in the descent.

Although steep, the climb down was easy and they only stopped when some freak in the formation arrested their attention or when the girl paused to exclaim in wonder at the beauty of the view. Soon they came to the brow of a gentler descent, and from here they could look out across the

shoulder of the peak and see the entire length of beach, as it ran away eastward. Gazing long and earnestly, Starbuck could see no sign of human occupation, and the girl, divining his thoughts, was rather relieved by the reflection that no swarthy Caroline Islanders were to complicate matters for her, even though their presence might mean an earlier deliverance.

Descending the last incline, they came to within a stone's throw of the water's edge. The long river of stiffened lava ran out in a great black tongue under the sea for several hundred yards, its crest in places cropping out among the gently lapping ripples. On either side of where they stood there was a sharp declivity of ten to fifteen feet, which marked the depth of the lava flow over the beach. The shores and slope of the hill for a long distance were almost denuded of tall growth, being covered only by the newer trees and bushes which had grown since the eruption. Starbuck estimated by their size that the activity of the crater could not have been more than two, or at most, three years before.

Exploring the edges of the flow, the sailor uttered a cry that brought the girl quickly to him. He was bending over the charred remains of a hut, of which only the blackened poles that formed its roof were left, but one half of these were still embedded in

the sand, where they had originally stood when the molten rock had overwhelmed the frail habitation.

"There must have been a village here," said Starbuck, "and it was buried up in the eruption. It is clear enough now why the island is not inhabited. It must be tabu."

"And what is that?" asked the girl, looking curiously at the ruins of a savage home and realizing the catastrophe in growing wonder.

"Tabu in the islands of the Pacific," he explained, "means 'forbidden.' The basis of it is superstition, although a pretty practical sort of man wouldn't blame a native for steering clear of a proposition like this. I wonder if any of 'em got caught. Probably not, though, the thing would give some sort of warning. Must have been a small village, too," he commented, as he took in the extent of the lava. "Maybe this wasn't the first time that 'Starbuck Mountain' has showed off its fireworks, and only a few were brave enough to risk taking out citizenship papers."

Of one thing Starbuck felt fairly sure. As he had said, the island was "tabu," and this fact, to his mind, knowing the habits of the natives, made it practically certain that the island would not be visited for a long time, at least by the suspicious, devil-haunted rovers of Micronesia. He did not

tell the girl his thoughts, but the discovery tended greatly to lower his hopes of an early rescue. There was nothing to bring a ship, and this being true, there was nothing for them to count upon but a chance arrival, as of a whaler in search of fresh water or fruit to drive the scourge of scurvy from her crew.

Poking about in the ruins of the hut, Starbuck gave a cry of satisfaction, as he held up, for her to see, a stone implement that evidently had been used as an axe and another with a slightly concaved surface that was plainly an adze. Rawhide lashings, partly charred, still clung to the stones. Eagerly both searched for more articles left behind in hurried flight and soon a pearl-shell spearhead and another piece of shell, cut in saw teeth, rewarded them, but there was nothing more.

Starbuck, who had been trying to pry up a mass of lava that evidently covered a part of the floor of the hut, suddenly stopped and listened. His intent attitude startled the girl, who was about to ask the cause when she saw him drop his lever softly and seize the boathook that lay nearby. With this he left the confines of the hut, and still listening, stealthily moved up the beach toward the line of trees, where she saw him throw himself flat on the sand and peer through the tangled vines. He worked himself carefully along, making no sound,

until he was some twenty yards away, when he rose with a bound, and, with the boathook poised, spearlike, hurled the shaft with all his strength into the bushes. Instantly a scream of pain rose high and the girl turned pale, and her knees trembled as another and still another shriek issued forth. She saw Starbuck dive into the underbrush and heard swift blows that interrupted the cries. Again and again the thud of the heavy boathook was repeated until at last there was silence.

"Oh," cried the girl, "what is it? Why do you not speak?"

Too frightened to move, her eyes grew big with horror as she saw the man's head and shoulders emerge, dragging something behind him.

"There," he exclaimed, in triumph, as he threw his burden on the beach, "good luck is with us to-day. But he nearly got away."

Not until she heard him laugh in surprise did she uncover the eyes she had hidden in her hands.

When she looked up the sight that met her gaze caused a revulsion of feeling that wellnigh choked her. Starbuck was staring at her in blank amazement over the body of a small pig, which lay stretched out dead at his feet.

"Come," he said, "this will never do. You mustn't go on like that."

For the girl was almost hysterical, laughing and

weeping in uncontrolled paroxysms. Starbuck came close and put a hand on her shoulder.

"It's all right, child," he said gently, "I didn't mean to frighten you. I didn't think."

"I — I know," she gasped, making an effort to control herself. "I know it's absurd of me, but — but you looked so warlike, and so fierce, that I thought it must be savages, and — and it was only a pig."

"Only a pig," he echoed, "but there are more of them, and think what they mean to us. Fresh meat and smoked hams and — and shoes," he concluded, noticing Miss Channing's dilapidated footwear for the first time. "We must make you some in pretty short order by the looks of yours. How in the world did you climb that hill in those things? Aren't your feet bruised and cut?" he demanded, as he viewed the remains of what had once been dainty pumps. "Why didn't you say something about it?"

"They weren't so bad when we started," answered the girl, who, quiet again, was wiping the tears from her eyes with her sleeve, "and besides, I have no others."

"Well, we'll fix that," he answered, swinging the small porker over one shoulder by a leg and handing her the boathook. "Help yourself along with that, and we'll go back by way of the beach.

You never could climb that rough lava bed, and besides, we'll see what the shores look like on the way home."

Home! Like a blow, the force of the word struck her. A lump came into her throat and she swallowed hard to keep the tears from flowing again. He noticed, and turning to look at her, a wave of real sympathy swept over him. Her waist was torn by brambles, her skirt soiled by the scramble up the steep hill, and her hair, still sticky from the salt water, was half tumbling from its too few pins. It would have been a cold heart that would have felt no pity and his was by no means invulnerable, hardened follower of the sea though he had been for more than a decade.

"Your feet *do* hurt," he said. "We'll rest here, and you can wash them in the sea if you like, while I do a little more exploring."

He threw down the pig and helped her to a lump of lava that was lapped by the waves, where she sat down, glad of the chance to recover her poise after her recent fright. She felt grateful to him for his tact in leaving her to herself, and proceeded forthwith to follow his suggestion. Pulling off her stockings, which were literally in shreds, she let her feet fall into the water, delicious in its refreshing coolness, and watched Starbuck as he walked here and there along the beach some distance away, ex-

amining the sand for further treasures. Before long she saw him look at the sun as if anxious to move on, and with some reluctance, reclothing her feet in their tatters, she presently joined him.

They took up the march again, he leading rather slowly out of consideration for her. She felt much better for the rest, and the harder sand near the water's edge was much easier walking than the forest floor with its roots and rocks. Examining carefully every feature of land and sea and reef as he went, Starbuck pointed out to her the things that he observed. He appeared to know much of the islands of the Pacific. He had also read of much more than he had actually seen, and explained, as they went along, the characteristics of the different regions both north and south of the Line. The three or four miles back to the stream and their only abode passed much more quickly than she had foreseen, but it was with a sigh of relief that she saw ahead the smoke of the fire and heard the crash of a falling tree, where the Frenchman was evidently still at work obeying instructions.

As they neared the stream she said quietly to Starbuck: "I wish a little time to myself, before we begin anything new in the way of the day's work, and if you and Monsieur will keep to the beach for a little while, I will come back much more ready to do my share."

Starbuck acquiesced silently, with a grave motion of his head, and watched her turn aside along the course of the brook before he splashed through its shallows to join the Frenchman.

Aubert had done fairly well in cutting poles for the proposed shelter and had a good sized pile ready for inspection. Starbuck gave him due credit for his labours but the slight praise was forgotten in the sight of the pig, which the sailor tossed on the sand. Aubert, hungry, as was the other for meat, clapped his hands together and almost shouted in anticipation of the feast to come.

"Shut up," said Starbuck, shortly, "any one would take you for a cannibal, who hadn't seen a shin bone for a month. If you're so crazy about that pig you can dress him for dinner."

The man's face fell at this, but seeing that Starbuck was in earnest, he gingerly picked up the small carcass and was about to plunge the knife into it, when the sailor stopped him.

"No," he said, "I'll do it. You'd punch his hide full of slits. Put some more wood on the fire and get me some of that sticky earth back under the trees. No," he shouted, "this way," as the Frenchman innocently started up the brook.

With his own knife, which he found to be considerably dulled, having been used to whittle down saplings, he flayed the animal, after removing the

intestines, which he cleaned carefully and hung on a nearby bush. Next he wrapped him entire in a huge plantain leaf, and when Aubert returned, plastered the whole with the clayey earth. Then, scraping a hole in the ashes of the fire, he laid the pig in it and covered it, as he had the breadfruit, with hot stones, and finally, heaped up the earth.

"Now," he said, as he finished, "we'll see what sort of house carpenters we are."

Choosing a level spot between two cocoanut palms just back of the slope of the beach and fifty yards or so from the stream, Starbuck marked out a circle about twelve feet in diameter. Tying two of the Frenchman's poles together at their tops with a lashing of bark, he bent them in a half circle, sticking the ends firmly into the ground, while Aubert held the centre. With two others, similarly tied, he crossed these at right angles, dividing the circle of ground into quarter segments, and with many more, joined in the same manner, the space between was gradually filled up until the whole looked like the ribs of a huge umbrella. Both men now gathered quantities of great, dry cocoanut leaves, and beginning at the bottom, wove them in and out among the poles to form the thatch, strengthening the structure at intervals with vine stems, which were passed through horizontally. Fired, perhaps, in a measure by the energetic ex-

ample of Starbuck, the Frenchman did his share and the work progressed well. They had been at it for several hours when they heard a voice and turned to see Miss Channing at the aperture left for the door.

"Wonderful," she exclaimed in surprise at the dwelling which had sprung up out of nothing in her absence. "You must have worked very hard to do all this. But, as the walking delegate of this union, I order you to quit or lose your cards. Isn't that what they do," she asked, "when they find men working over time?"

Both men laughed and Starbuck realized it was growing late. As he came out of the hut, which still lacked a good part of its roof, he noted with surprise the change in her appearance. Her hair, which had before been twisted in a sticky mass around her head, was smooth and shone like silk in the sun, though it was still damp about her ears, showing that she had been washing it in the fresh water of the stream. He glanced with almost shy admiration at its softness and abundance. Her clothing, too, showed the effects of her labours. Her waist was clean and her skirt was free of the spots of green and soil that had stained it earlier in the day. The Frenchman noted the change also with perhaps a bolder glance of appreciation, but neither man spoke of it.

"I wanted to get it done to-day," said Starbuck, waving a hand at the hut, "but I'm afraid there isn't time. However, we can throw this sail over the hole in the top and it will do until to-morrow."

While Aubert had been off gathering more palm leaves, Starbuck had found time to make a sort of screen for a door and a bar with which to fasten it on the inside. This he now handed to the girl.

"Here, Miss Channing," he said, "are the keys of your bungalow on the Beach Promenade. I hope you will be more comfortable than you were last night. And now," he continued, as he moved toward the fire to escape the girl's thanks, "our swell dinner of roast pig must be about done, I should say."

With a stick he demolished the pile above the smoking porker and the savoury odour that arose called the others irresistibly.

As the sun sank into the sea they made a hearty meal, washing it down with clear, cool draughts of water from the stream, and they had ripe cocoanuts for dessert, with the sweet milk for a liqueur. The darkness came on almost at once, and all three, wearied with the strenuous activities of the long day, were glad to rest. The men carried quantities of grass to the hut, with which they made a comfortable couch and Starbuck brought the two sheets he had saved from the sea.

"Luxury!" cried the girl, as she watched the preparations. "Unheard of luxury for a castaway. But," she added, "they are most welcome. That grass! Ugh! it seemed full of crawly things."

She bade them good night and entered, barring the screen behind her, and the two men sought their own places, which they had prepared side by side within earshot of the hut. All three slept soundly until the break of day.

CHAPTER IX

WITH DEATH IN THE CUP

THE morning dawned bright and calm. Starbuck, up with the sun, was raking apart the banked-up ashes of the fire in search of live coals, when he heard a step on the beach and turned to see Miss Channing coming toward him from her hut.

"Good morning, Mr. Starbuck," she was saying, "it seems to me that it would be only a fair division of labour for me to take charge of the kitchen. You men will have enough other matters to attend to, I fancy, to want to be free of such things. But we ought really to have some dishes. We need some bowls and something for plates, and I have been thinking even of knives and forks."

Starbuck smiled. He was glad to see that the girl was beginning to take a real interest in her life as a castaway, and, that she should first propose something that would contribute to the comfort of all, increased his approval of her.

"Why, yes," he answered readily, "in our walk yesterday, I saw some calabashes growing not far

back along the stream, and split bamboo will make the finest kind of dinner knives. There's some of that, too. We passed a clump of it just beyond the point there. As for plates, we'll have to use plantain leaves until we can make something better, so there we are. Not so difficult, even on a desert island."

"Anything but a desert island, I should say," was her rejoinder, as she set about helping him gather wood. "I'm sure we are living at the height of luxury, with all the fruits of the Indies growing over our heads, and all ready to drop into our mouths, though really, it would be rather painful to have that literally happen," she concluded, glancing aloft where a bunch of nearly ripe cocoanuts hung, fifty feet above.

"You haven't yet tested the best Starbuck Island has to offer," said the owner of the name, fanning the coals into a blaze with a piece of palm leaf. "There is betel in these woods, that makes your teeth turn red, and yams, like sweet potatoes, only a dozen or so times as big, and kava root, that they make punch of in these parts, and then, best of all, palm salad, of the tender shoots of the leaves, and palm wine, which is the fermented sap of the forming blossom. Oh, no, there are lots of things to tickle our palates besides cocoanuts and breadfruits."

Turning, he saw Aubert close at his elbow, and the two men exchanged curt nods.

"Aubert," he said, "take my knife, and around the point you'll find a bunch of bamboo. Cut the biggest one and tow it in; we need some knives and forks. Breakfast will be ready by the time you get back," he added, as he saw the Frenchman hesitate and glance at the preparations Miss Channing was making.

He went, and Starbuck disappeared in search of his calabashes, returning in a short time with half a dozen of all sizes.

"When these are dry they make the best kind of cooking dishes," he said, carving them in halves with the pocket-knife belonging to Aubert, which Miss Channing produced.

While the breadfruit was cooking the sailor went to the stream and brought back a huge armful of dripping, brownish stuff, which he threw down on the beach with an exclamation of satisfaction.

"This is a piece of luck I did not expect," he said, as he began to turn the mass over. "These once were cocoanut husks," he explained. "They have lain where they fell in the stream for months, probably, and everything has rotted away but the fibres. This is the stuff that the natives make their rope with. Coir, they call it, and first-class rope it is, too. I've seen a ship's cable of this that was better

than manila and almost as good as chain. You wouldn't think those little short fibres would cling together, but they do, and they never rot."

He now began to pick the fibres from the heap, rolling them between his palms, adding more and more as the length grew until he achieved a long strand.

"We won't try a real rope, just yet," he said, "but I'll show you how to make sennit, which we'll need a lot of."

With four strands he started a braid, which grew under his fingers into a round cord, which, with the material at hand, could be continued indefinitely.

"Want to learn?" he asked.

"Indeed, I should love to try it," cried the girl, and forthwith took a lesson, picking up the knack so readily and going on with the piece he had started with so few mistakes that Starbuck told her that he would make an A. B. of her in half a dozen lessons, so far as seamanship lay in rope making.

"I intend," said Starbuck, as he knelt at her side, pointing out now and then a remedy for the wrong turn of a strand, "to see if we can't raise the dinghy out there by the reef. I've thought out a way that will take a lot of rope, but your spare moments and mine ought to grow enough in a week or so, I should think."

As he spoke he gazed out toward the barrier

where the waves were now barely breaking. The boat, he knew, must lie just inside the gap.

"I'm going to swim out there and have a look," he said. "It won't take long, and I'll lay that the appetite I'll have when I get back will keep the rest of that pig from spoiling."

"Are there no sharks?" cried the girl in alarm, as Starbuck without more words started down the beach.

"I don't believe so," he called back. "You see this island hasn't been inhabited for two or three years and there has been nothing to attract the brutes. They hang about the lagoons of populous islands, feeding on refuse and now and then a dainty bit of man's foot or leg. I've been watching here and I haven't seen a fin out of water yet."

Notwithstanding his reassurance the girl was disturbed. The thought of anything happening to Starbuck was almost appalling. The idea of being left alone with Aubert on the island struck a chill to her heart, for he had already shown her that his type was that of the boulevardier, the ogler of women, the accoster of passing girls. She remembered his attempt to tell her of his silly dream and she shuddered at the suggestion of an existence that might become an unspeakable horror. There he was, even now, before her, coming along the beach dragging behind him a great stalk of bamboo.

With almost the impulse of panic she leaped to her feet and ran madly down the beach toward Starbuck, who was now some distance away and walking briskly as he calculated the shortest distance from the shore to the break in the reef. He was already unfastening his shirt, exposing his deep, muscular chest preparatory to plunging in. Panting, partly in terror and in part with exertion, she seized his arm.

"Don't, Mr. Starbuck, I beg of you, don't. You mustn't! I — I can't tell you — Oh, won't you understand?" she pleaded, as in utter amazement he stared down at her.

"Why," he said at last, as she clung to his hand with tears rushing to her eyes, "if you feel that way about it I won't, but I don't believe there's much danger."

"Please," she cried, "you mustn't misunderstand. If you — if anything should happen — don't you see? I should be alone with that man. Alone with him here, on this island! I would rather die!"

Starbuck now saw what he had not observed before; that the girl, whatever her feeling toward himself, at least distrusted Aubert, and in view of this he suddenly felt the part she had given him to play in this drama of three characters was that of protector. That she should lay bare her terror be-

fore him and plead for his guardianship was enough. Starbuck fastened his shirt, and together they turned back, the man talking quietly of a plan to construct some kind of a boat which should assist him in his scheme.

This little scene was not lost on Aubert though he did not dream its true meaning. The day before he had been piqued at being left out of the little exploring excursion and the ceremony of the flag on the hilltop, and fearing Starbuck, and in consequence hating him cordially, he now added jealousy to his dislike. This common sailorman, he considered, was taking an unfair advantage with the girl, for, given an opportunity, he was sure he could make a favourable impression on her as he had done with women of all degrees all his life. It was not that affection prompted his feelings; it was the pleasure of the conquest, the satisfaction of counting another coup in his list of *affaires* and the gratification of his vanity.

Scowling, he threw down the bamboo and muttered an imprecation against Starbuck for a Yankee pig, but he was all smiles when they came up and even assisted in laying out the smoking breadfruit and in cracking the cocoanuts.

Starbuck now tried his hand at a new dish. Bringing out the saw-toothed pearl shell he had found on the site of the ruined hut, he fixed it

firmly in the cleft of a stick, and taking half of a nearly ripe nut, flaked off the meat by twisting it over the sharp teeth. The white shreds he caught in a plantain leaf and squeezed through a handkerchief, which he had washed clean.

A creamy foam strained through the cloth and spread itself over the hot fruit, a delicious sauce which the girl exclaimed over many times as she ate.

The meal over, the two men quickly finished thatching the hut and Starbuck outlined his plan for building a boat.

"It will have to be a sort of catamaran," he explained, "for we've no tools to speak of and it will be a hard job at best."

Together he and Aubert started for the interior of the island to look for a suitable log, taking with them the stone axe, which had been fitted to a helve with lashings of rawhide. Miss Channing, glad to be left alone, after a time resumed her work of sennit braiding, rapidly becoming even more proficient than Starbuck himself in weaving the tough fibres into a smooth, round fabric.

The men were gone some time, and at last, when she heard them returning, the sun was high over head and the breeze that blew in from the sea was grateful. She heard them struggling in the woods long before they finally rolled out on the beach a

large log, some two feet in diameter and about eighteen feet long. They had found the tree uprooted, they said, some distance up the valley, had rolled it to the stream and floated it down by dint of great effort, hoisting and prying it with improvised cantdogs over rocks and shoals.

The log was now horsed up at a convenient height, and with stone axe and adze, the two set to work to round the ends and hollow the centre. Strenuous work as it would have been with tools of steel, with these primitive implements the process went with heart-breaking slowness. For some time the girl watched in silence the chipping of the dull edges upon the tough wood.

"Why don't you try to burn it out? Isn't that what the Indians used to do when they made dugouts?" she asked finally.

"Good for you," was the hearty response of Starbuck as he dropped his axe. "I was a lubber not to think of it."

With fire as an agent, the work went more rapidly, though it was plain that it would be days before the log took on even the rough appearance of a canoe. In the afternoon they stopped and gathered the food for their evening meal, and Starbuck, though tired, shinned the leaning trunk of one of the smaller palms, while Aubert and the girl watched him as he plucked some of the tender

shoots, still enclosed in their tough sheaths. Before descending they saw him, with the haft of his knife, bruise the spathe that enclosed an embryo flower stalk.

"In a day or so," he said, "that will be full of juice and they say it makes the best kind of a drink. We'll catch it in one of these calabash bowls when it's ready."

During the day the men built a small hut for their sleeping quarters, facing the beach and a short way from the girl's shelter, and by nightfall all three of the toil-worn castaways slept the delicious sleep of physical weariness.

As usual, Starbuck was early astir, and though he tried to arouse Aubert, the man was dead with sleep and unaccustomed fatigue and he gave up the attempt until he should have started the fire. Emerging from his shelter, he saw the girl standing on the breeze-swept beach, gazing out to sea with her eyes shaded by her hands. She did not turn as he approached, and when finally she was forced to greet him, he saw that her eyes were moist with scarcely controlled tears.

"I was looking for a sail," she said, simply.

"I know," said Starbuck. "It is very hard for you but you must not be discouraged yet awhile. When the monsoon changes and blows from the southwest we will keep a lookout in earnest, but

now I'm afraid the chance of a ship hereabouts is small."

The girl answered with a wistful attempt at good cheer, and left him to go to the stream, while he looked after her with a more kindly sympathy in his eyes. Before she returned he climbed the palm with a calabash swinging from his neck and found the flower spathe nearly full of cool liquid, which he drew off into his vessel.

"I never drank any of this stuff," he said, as the girl reappeared, fresh from her dip and glowing with healthy colour, "but I have heard men say that it's the best there is. You have to let it stand a few hours to ferment, so we'll hang this bottle on a limb back there in the shade till noon. Say, there's a lot of it, isn't there?" and he let her sniff the fragrant contents.

While they were talking Aubert appeared and Starbuck caught the unpleasant look in his face as he came up. However, he knew the man must be lame and sore with his hard work of yesterday, and his evident ill humour did not impress him as strange. All the morning the two men dug at the log, burning and hacking out the wood as best they might. While eating their lunch at noon, Starbuck startled them with an exclamation.

"I believe it can be done! I'm sure of it!"

The other two waited for an explanation.

"Turn wrought iron into steel," he said. "That boathook and the rings on the boat's mast are wrought iron, and if I had a crucible I'd start a steel trust right here and now, and an axe is the first thing I would make with my infant industry. You have to have the right kind of clay," he went on excitedly, turning to Miss Channing, "and I noticed something that might do, up on the slope of the hill."

Seizing a calabash bowl, he hastily directed Aubert for the continuance of the work on the boat, and saying that he might be gone an hour or more, he departed through the trees, leaving the girl looking after him anxiously.

After clearing away the debris of the luncheon and heaping more wood on the fire, which was being constantly used now in the work of making the dugout, the girl settled herself again at her rope making. It was not hard work and she rather enjoyed seeing the strong, brown cords grow under her fingers. Absorbed in her occupation, she took no notice of Aubert, who had sullenly seized his tools and was aimlessly chipping away at the inside of the log. At the end of a few moments he dropped his adze and went away, soon returning to take up his work once more. Within a short time he did this again, but the girl did not heed. After an interval the Frenchman came to the fire for coals, and

instead of at once returning to his work, stopped, and seating himself by her side began to talk. At first she was silent, answering him in monosyllables, hoping that he would go away, but soon his conversation began to take a personal tone and she determined to dismiss him if possible.

"Monsieur Aubert," she said, "do you not think we are wasting time talking here? Mr. Starbuck is anxious, I know, to finish the boat as soon as possible, for he says that soon the monsoon will change and there will be rough weather. He wishes to try raising the ship's boat out there by the reef before storms interfere and possibly shift its position or drag it out to sea. I think that we should remember that he is working and planning every waking moment to release us from this island, and we should be willing to do our share at his direction."

"Ah, Starbuck!" cried the man, almost interrupting her. "Yes, it is always Starbuck with you. Always I find you together. You utterly disregard the warning I have given you. You do not care. You even welcome him and his base attention."

"Stop," cried the girl, starting to her feet. "How dare you say such things to me, you, who have already proved yourself to be a coward in a woman's presence."

Watching him narrowly, she saw his black eyes

light evilly as he began to make protest that she had misunderstood him.

"It is no insult that I offer, Mademoiselle," he vociferated, gesticulating with hands and shoulders. "It is that you have become blinded by this man, that you do not weigh him with a mind of calmness. You have what you call, the wool pulled over the eyes. You no longer have discernment, while I, I would lay down my life to protect you, Mademoiselle, even though you have given me no reason."

"Monsieur Aubert," she retorted, "I have no need of your protection. Mr. Starbuck I believe to be a man of honour, and at least he has treated me with a consideration that you have not shown. I will thank you to return at once to your work and to leave me to myself, not only now but hereafter."

Turning abruptly, she walked away from him down the beach, while he, with rolling eyes, looked after her, muttering to himself rapidly, grimacing and shrugging.

For some little time, angry at his rebuff, the Frenchman stood watching her now diminutive figure in the distance. He returned to the dugout and picked up the stone adze but threw it down again in disgust, and, looking slyly about, made another of his little excursions.

Miss Channing found herself more shaken by her encounter than she would have liked to admit. To

steady herself she walked briskly, letting the breeze blow through her hair, cooling her face and neck with its grateful breath. She foresaw trouble from this man and wondered what she ought to do. Tale-bearing was most distasteful to her, yet unless she hinted to Starbuck of her discomfiture she would never feel safe when he left her side. In a quandary she sat down facing the sea and tried to reason the matter out. Her position, in the nature of it, was sufficiently anomalous without the added complication of a man whose foolish attentions were likely to grow into a serious annoyance.

A quick, irregular step on the sand behind her set her atremble as she sprang to her feet, half expecting to see Starbuck himself. Instead, she saw Aubert approaching rapidly from the direction of the camp. The change in his appearance was as startling as his presence. His eyes were half bloodshot and his face wore a cunning grin, as with a slight unsteadiness he came toward her.

"Ah, my Mademoiselle," he was saying, "I could not bear it that you should be angry with me, I who adore the very sand under your pretty feet. I cannot believe that you should prefer that low Starbuck to me, a gentleman of Paris. Surely I see regard for me in your beautiful eyes, even when you would have me believe that you detest. I come to plead with you, Mademoiselle, to beg of you not

to trifle with the grand passion of a man who would be your slave, who cares only for you, who loves you to distraction. Regard me, then, upon my very knees asking for your favour."

Riveted to the spot in amazement and terror, she saw him throw himself at her feet and felt her hand seized in his and his hot mouth upon her palm. The touch startled her to action like the shock of a battery. Jerking her hand away, she swept it with a full stroke of her arm across his face, and turning, sped up the beach with a choking scream. Aubert, his cheek stinging with the blow and his passion aroused to sheer madness, was after her in an instant. With great strides he gained upon her. She heard him coming, and with a wild glance over her shoulder her fright increased to a panic. She screamed as she felt his hot breath on her neck. A hand clutched her shoulder, another dragged at her hair, and in an instant more she was in his arms, struggling, helpless, his bearded lips pressed to hers in a horrid embrace, stifling her cries.

Neither heard the heavy footsteps on the beach; neither heard the shout of rage nor saw the figure of Starbuck tearing toward them.

Half fainting as she lay in Aubert's tightening clasp, she felt a sudden shock. The arms about her loosened and she fell to the sand, panting, half blinded by fright, sobbing with the terror of the

attack. Vaguely, at first, she realized that something had happened to save her, but it was several seconds before the identity of Starbuck forced itself upon her dazed brain. Wakened into a more vivid consciousness by an oath, round and savage, as it came from his set teeth, she opened her eyes to watch a scene that remained sharp and clear-cut in her memory for ever.

Starbuck had returned with his fire clay, and on reaching the camping place, had instantly missed both Miss Channing and Aubert. Stepping out on the beach, he was just in time to catch the girl's faint cry and to see the pursuing Frenchman lock her in his bestial embrace. Flinging his burden from him, the sailor with a bellow dashed down the beach, a whirlwind of living force, bent on punishment, swift and deadly certain. He raged as the girl's helpless struggles told him of her dire need, and a hot torrent, rushing to his brain, threw a blood-red film across his vision as at last he hurled himself upon the man, grasping his throat in a grip that exulted in the feel of the soft flesh as his finger ends sank deep.

With a choking cough the man let the girl's body drop away, and with both hands in a spasmodic clasp on the arm that held him, sought to free himself. He twisted and jerked his body from side to side, loosening the hold that throttled him. Gasp-

ing, his face purple, blotched, his eyes popping outward under bulging lids, the Frenchman now realized that he was fighting for his very life.

The two men half circled about each other, each trying to compass a fall. Starbuck's hold with his right hand had shifted to Aubert's clothing and the light material of his shirt was giving away. The Frenchman had succeeded in getting a counter hold on Starbuck's neck, jamming his thumb under the ear and causing the most exquisite pain. Twisting out of his grasp, Starbuck attempted to trip the man, and failing, ducked under the questing hands and seized him around the body, pressing his face into the hollow of the shoulder to escape the snapping jaws, whose teeth clicked together in vain attempt to fasten upon his throat. Hugging with all the strength that was in his great arms, Starbuck felt the Frenchman's back hollow as he sought to escape the crushing violence.

They rocked and swayed together, panting in tremendous effort. The Frenchman spat. Twisting suddenly, with one foot off the ground, he eased the pressure from his cracking spine and brought it under the arm. Starbuck, silent, terrible, maddened with the struggle itself, now felt the Frenchman's free hand searching for his eye-balls with its thumb. Raising his head, he suddenly lifted his right arm, bringing the heel of his hand under

Aubert's chin. With a great heave of arm and shoulder, he pushed the head back, twisting it far to one side, and at the same time dropped to his right knee, the man's back lying over his left. Something snapped; there was a convulsion of the sprawling limbs. The tense body collapsed and rolled over into the sand, face downward.

White-faced, her eyes staring, Eleanor Channing, under the spell of a horrible fascination, had watched the struggle, her body stiff with fright, leaning forward as she sat, her arms outstretched, her hands clutching at the sand. She saw the mighty heave of Starbuck's shoulders as he caught the Frenchman in the death grip, and she saw the limp body drop on its face and lie still. A feeling of triumph and immense relief was displaced the next instant by a wave of revulsion that nauseated her inmost being. The complete horror of it all swept over her as she saw at last that the man was dead. She had sat by and had seen him killed, his life snuffed out by the two hands of the man before her as she might extinguish a candle.

The reaction from intensity of emotion left her weak and trembling, shaken in every nerve, sick with fright and the shock of her own assault. She hardly realized what had taken place, and still less that while the battle lasted, she herself had watched with the veritable ferocity of a savage, almost cry-

ing out at every advantage won by her champion, taking an untamed delight in what seemed to her just punishment, praying with a wild fervour that Starbuck might triumph.

Starbuck had risen, and was standing over the fallen man, his arms hanging loosely by his sides, his fingers half curled. His jaw protruded, his under lip hung slack, baring his teeth, and his eyes, half closed, still shone with the exultation of conflict. His shirt, torn to strips, hung about his waist, leaving the upper part of his body nude and covered with red splotches where the Frenchman's hands had gripped him. From his shoulder, where the other's teeth had met in a last, desperate defence, the blood welled and trickled down his arm, dripping steadily from the ends of his fingers. He stood with all his muscles relaxed, yet alert, as if waiting for his enemy to rise and again confront him.

Finally, seeing no motion in the man's body, he stooped, and grasping it by the shoulder, turned it over with a jerk. The head, bent backward at an unnatural angle, wobbled from side to side and the wide open eyes stared up at him glassily. The lips, drawn back with the intensity of the last flashing pain, seemed to grin. Slowly Starbuck knelt and laid a hand on the left breast. No throb was there, and with the tardy realization that Aubert was dead, came a breaking of the spell of battle. He brushed

his hand across his eyes, and noticed the blood on his fingers and the condition of his clothing. He turned his head and saw the girl, her face buried in her hands, rocking to and fro on the sand, silent, horrified.

Hastily he wiped his blood-stained arm on the remnants of his shirt and stepped toward her.

"Oh, don't, don't touch me!" she barely whispered, "don't come near!"

"But you mustn't stay here," he said in a low tone. "Come, you need not look. Go back to the camp. I understand. It must have been awful for you."

For a moment she did not move; then, as if calling upon herself for a great effort, she slowly rose, her face averted and still covered with her hands. She staggered a little as she stood erect and Starbuck stretched out a hand, thinking she was about to fall. She shuddered as he touched her arm and shrank away from him as from an unclean thing. He made no effort to direct her, but watched as she hesitatingly drew her hands from her face and walked unsteadily in the direction of the camp. He did not follow.

Standing in his tracks, he saw her finally disappear into her hut; then he turned and looked once more at the body on the sand.

In swift resolution he turned the pockets of the

trousers inside out, finding the comb and nothing more.

Hesitating a few moments to be sure she should not see, he shouldered the body with an effort and walked heavily down the beach in the opposite direction, bending beneath his grim burden. He kept on until he had rounded the point, out of sight, and laid the corpse down, looking at it as if undecided as to its disposal. Finally he began stripping off the clothing, which he made into a small bundle.

Now he was in a quandary. Having no tools with which to dig a decent grave, he thought of throwing the body into the sea, but this plan he abandoned when it occurred to him that it would probably attract sharks, which later would be a menace. The sun was getting low in the west, reminding him that whatever was to be done must be done quickly. He doubted that he could bury the corpse deep enough to render it secure from the hogs on the island, so at last the only plan left was that of fire.

Once having come to a decision he acted quickly. He did not wish, for obvious reasons, to return to camp for coals, and the alternative was the laborious and primitive process he had first employed. He set to work, however, and after much effort made a blaze. Stepping into the tangle of growth

he returned again and again, laden down with dry wood and the great leaves of the cocoa palm, which burn with a hot flame. Piling these loosely criss-crossed on the wet sand where the water almost lapped the sticks, he built a funeral pyre shoulder high, upon which he placed the body. Carrying embers from his small blaze, he ignited the mass, and in a moment, fanned by the breeze, the flames were leaping high above the dead man, lighting up his white skin, their red tongues licking at his face, singeing off his hair and beard. Starbuck watched, now and then inserting palm branches and leaves to quicken the blaze.

The gathering darkness began to shut in the circle of weird light, and in the centre the corpse glowed above the coals. The limbs seemed to twist and writhe in the fierce waves of heat, while the living man, his half-naked body lit by the glow, his skin blood-flecked from his dripping wound, came and went, piling fresh fuel on the pyre, engrossed utterly in his grisly task.

In fifteen minutes the body was cinder black; in an hour it was ashes and the pile a smouldering heap. Starbuck pushed what remained far into the sea and turned homeward. In the darkness when he arrived, there was no sign of Miss Channing. He went to her hut and found the screen barred in place. He spoke softly to her but received no reply,

though he heard her start at the sound of his voice. Going down to the sea, he stripped and plunged into the low surf, cleansing himself of the marks of battle, and returning, bound up his torn shoulder as well as he could with the pieces of his shirt. The latter was a great loss to him as it was his only body garment, and he wondered what he should do to cover his nakedness, for Aubert's shirt, also, was so torn as to be unwearable.

The girl, too distressed to eat, had crept to the privacy of her hut, supperless. Too distraught to cook himself anything or even to scrape a raw cocoanut, Starbuck sought his own couch of grass, but not to sleep. He lay a long time thinking of the deed he had done.

It was no murder, he reasoned, but a fair fight and the best man had won. He had stood as the protector of a defenceless woman. He had killed her enemy and burned his body but his hands were clean of crime. Though his act had been done in madness after the outrage he had seen, yet he was conscious that it had to be, for no punishment short of death was severe enough to maintain its effect. The man he likened to the captive tiger, docile until it tastes fresh blood, and after that never safe. Even civilized law would exonerate him, he thought, and here, under the palms and the sky there was no law but the law of Nature and of Nature's God, and

that great precept, he felt, would hold him blameless should he, in the days, perhaps months to come, keep himself blameless. Protector he had chosen to make himself; protector he must remain.

CHAPTER X

THE CLEAN AIR OF MORNING

THE first matter that occupied Starbuck's attention upon awakening was the matter of clothing. Without a shirt he was scarcely fit company for a woman of Miss Eleanor Channing's breeding, and he surveyed the ruins of his only upper garment in something like despair. By laying the pieces together, however, he saw that a skilful needle might make at least a covering for his breast and back, and though he well knew the consequences of baring his arms to the blistering sun, there was no help for it. In the Frenchman's knife was the needle he wanted, and with threads drawn from the linen and twisted to the proper strength, his sailor's aptitude, after half an hour's stitching, put him in possession of a sleeveless tunic, frail enough, but serviceable for the time being.

Putting it on and rather proud of his handiwork, Starbuck stepped out into the sunlight. To his surprise he found that the fire had been rebuilt, a breakfast eaten, and Miss Channing had again retired to her hut. After a moment of indecision he

stepped quietly to the entrance, which was closed and barred, and spoke to her, asking if she was well, and if he could serve her in any way. In a voice scarcely audible, that trembled as she spoke, she replied that she was not ill and wanted nothing. She desired only to be left alone for a time, she said.

Understanding something of the terrible shock the experiences of the day before had been to her, Starbuck spoke a few words of assurance that she would presently be herself and left her. Casting about for some little attention that he could show, he thought of the calabash full of palm wine that he had hung on the tree to ferment. Going to the spot, he was amazed to find the bowl still hanging where he had left it, but empty. A light suddenly broke upon him, and he saw in a flash how the Frenchman had found the place; how in repeated visits he had drunk the liquor, which, mounting to his brain, had caused his insane attack upon the girl, and in turn, his own awful punishment. Starbuck cast the bowl into the bushes as an unclean thing and returned to the beach.

He examined carefully the progress made on the dugout and it became plain to him that without proper, or at least more efficient tools, he, single handed as he now was, would not be able to shape the obdurate material into anything like a craft for weeks. More than ever, now, he needed an axe,

and the determination grew upon him to attempt to turn what wrought iron he had into steel.

After a hurriedly eaten breakfast, taking the boathook and the largest of the bowls, he started for the head of the valley for another load of clay, of which he brought back some thirty pounds, depositing it in the shade of the green growth near the stream. His plan was to fuse the boathook head and the iron rings in a clay crucible with dry wood and leaves, as he had seen the process while on a voyage to India and Ceylon. He was aware that to do this a high temperature would be needed, which could only be supplied by a blast of air directed into his fire on the principle of a blacksmith's bellows.

To this end he built with rough stones, picked up near the beach, a small, conical, hollow pile, with two openings at the ground and another at the top, having about half-way up in its interior, supports of stone jutting out from the inner surface, intended to hold the clay crucible.

As he built, he lined the interior with clay mixed with sand, until the structure was tight; and the crevices of the outer walls he filled with the same material, heaping earth over the whole. Now his problem was a bellows. Taking the boathook once more, before it should for ever lose its character, he departed from the beach.

Hearing his retreating footsteps grow fainter

until at length they died away, Miss Channing ventured forth from her retreat. She listened, and finding that Starbuck was apparently gone for some little time, she went to the stream, bathed, and ordered her dress as best she could. The lack of soap was an extreme annoyance to her, and the sand and water that she made shift to use in its stead was roughening and painful to her skin, already deeply burned by the sun. Returning somewhat reluctantly to the beach, for the depth of shade by the brook was cool compared with the glaring sand, she was mystified by the cone-shaped structure the sailor had built. However, she was too far occupied with her own thoughts to wonder greatly, and seating herself near the hut, she fell to wondering at her ultimate fate, her thoughts always returning to the terrible nightmare she had passed through, the red memory of which brought a shudder and a searing flash of terror that left her brain numb with its vividness.

She felt, as again and again the scene returned, that unless she turned her thoughts into other channels she would go mad; but something seemed to enshroud her mind with a cloud of doubt, out of which rose Starbuck, with whom she was now left alone. Whether he would continue his impersonal relations with her or whether, having fought and vanquished his rival, he would turn to claim her as

the price of his victory, she did not know. If the latter were to be her lot, she would frustrate it by ending her life. She decided this quite calmly. If the former were to be his attitude, she would accept it, meeting him half-way in friendly intercourse, depending upon whatever force of personality she possessed to hold him beyond the line she would draw, the crossing of which would mean the end.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the snapping of twigs and the rustle of rasping bushes, and she turned to see the man with whom now lay her fate coming slowly through the sun-splotched valley. As she had last seen him, he was bare above the waist and his skin was scratched in many places by the brambles he had passed through. She saw him, unconscious that she was watching, stop, and half concealed by the thicket, take a white garment from a branch. When he resumed his way, dragging something behind him, she noted that he was partially clothed once more. She did not retreat to her shelter but sat expectantly, gazing across the beach at the sea. Still not seeing her, he stepped out of the shade and flung down a heavy body, and she heard him sigh with evident satisfaction.

"Two birds with one stone," she heard him mutter as he bent over what he had brought. "Dinner and my bellows, all at one heave of the iron."

She stirred and he looked around.

"Good morning," he called, "or is it afternoon. I've been hunting," and he stepped back to show her the carcass of a sizable hog, freshly killed.

"I was worried about you this morning," he said, as he advanced. "I know you must have suffered. It was a hard place for a woman like you, but I was proud of you, the way you took it."

She made a little motion with her hands as if to stop him, but he went on.

"It was the only way," he said, in an even tone, "you must know that. You never would have been safe after yesterday. I discovered the reason too," he continued, after a pause. "The man was drunk. The bowl of palm wine that we forgot to drink; he found it and it must have made him crazy. He might have done it again at any time. You see, don't you, that there was nothing else to do?"

He looked at her anxiously as he spoke his simple argument, as if trying to discover whether her horror still included him in its unreasoning prejudice.

"I know," she said at last, in a low tone, "I know. I should never have been safe. I felt it all along, from the very first; in the boat, even, before he lied to me."

"Lied to you?" questioned Starbuck, sharply. "Lied about what?"

She had said more than she intended, and now,

his interest aroused, she would have to explain. She hesitated, reddening painfully and turning away.

"When did he lie to you," again queried Starbuck, "and what did he say?"

"He said," spoke the girl finally, looking up bravely and searchingly into the man's face as with a scowl of intentness he bent to listen. "It was the day we landed. He said that the reason you struck him in the boat was because he was coming to my aid. That you — you were bending over me as I lay asleep, and he thought — Oh," she broke off, "I know it wasn't true, was it? You have been kind and I — I could not believe him," she finished, with a sob that choked her voice.

"The lying dog!" broke from the man's lips, as he clenched his great fists with almost a snarl of satisfaction at what had been their work of yesterday.

As she saw the sincerity of his action, horribly suggestive though it was, and heard the low note of anger and contempt that came with it, her heart grew lighter with the belief that the worst she had to fear was past and that this man would hold her in honour until they were free. As she looked at his blazing eyes, at the shaggy head, at the great breast muscles undulating through the thin film of linen, and saw his indignation at the insinuations of Aubert, she could not but believe in him. Rough he

might be, and brutal enough to take a man's life with his bare hands, but his heart was clean toward her. She noticed that the bandage he had roughly tied about his injured shoulder had slipped, and that the wound was bleeding afresh. Partly from real sympathy with his hurt, which, though ugly looking caused him little real inconvenience, and partly from a desire to end the painful topic, she turned and entered her lodge, returning with a strip of cloth which she had evidently just torn from one of her precious sheets.

"You must let me bind up that shoulder properly," she said, "even now the flesh looks red and inflamed all about and I'm sure it should be cleaned."

She made a soft pad with a part of the cloth, and after washing the ragged tear carefully, she bandaged the spot as deftly as a nurse could have done, going around the arm pit, over the shoulder, across the breast and back, with proper turnings, finally tying the ends firmly in a square knot.

"Where did you ever learn to do that?" he inquired, as he watched the process with some admiration. "Why, a real doctor has nothing on you. And the knot, too; a real reef knot! I'll lay you are the only woman in this latitude who could have done that."

Pleased with his appreciation, she told him that she had taken First Aid lessons, once, with a class of

other girls. The square knot was a part of the curriculum, she declared, and it had taken her longer to learn than anything else.

He laughed, and told her that if he ever got any time he would teach her knots that would make the rest of the class look like land-lubbers. As she tied the bandage she noticed his remarkable shirt, a thing veritably of shreds and patches, fearfully and wonderfully made.

"And you," she cried, "I must compliment you on your feminine accomplishment," and she pointed to the slight garment.

"Oh, that," he smiled, "I made that, and not out of whole cloth, either, early this morning, before you were up. I didn't have time to do any fancy stitches, but if I had the thread I could show you the real thing in the sewing line. Besides, it isn't female work for a sailor. It's part of our business."

"Why, of course," she said, examining the work with greater interest, "I forgot sailors could sew. But where did you get your needle and thread?"

He explained and handed her the knife, showing her the various implements it contained, and gave it to her, remarking as he looked at her costume, that she was likely to need some repairing herself before many days.

"I know," she said, glancing at her soiled waist

and torn, patched skirt. "What on earth shall we do? These things are all I have and they will soon be in tatters."

"Well," he answered, "we can make cloth, I suppose. I have seen the Marquesans do it and it looks easy enough. And that reminds me that it takes some time to prepare the stuff, so we'd best be about it now. They make it of bark," he explained, "and call it tappa. The inner bark of the hibiscus or mulberry tree is soaked in a running brook under a stone and aired every few days until the woody part is rotten and the tough fibres only are left. Then they beat it with a kind of stick and the trick is done. If you care to be busy you might strip the bark and put it in the stream."

He showed her the hibiscus growing all about them, and armed with a knife she started forth to follow his instructions.

"But, first," she said, pointing to the conical heap of rocks and earth, "tell me what you are doing there."

"This is my steel plant," he gravely replied. "To finish the canoe I need an axe, and I am going to make one, if I can, out of the boathook. That is my furnace. I'll show you when I'm ready to fire up."

She went about her bark gathering, and he attacked the pig, which he carefully skinned without

opening the belly, so that the hide came off practically whole. With his stone axe he cut two small trees with crotches at their tops, and planting them in position, lashed with sennit a horizontal bar across the two. Under this frame he placed the skin, in the under side of which he had cut a round hole. On the inside he fastened a flap of the stiffening hide of the pig he had previously killed, to act as a valve over the intake, and now, with a weight to press the bag down, and a counterpoise and lever over his framework, it became evident that his bellows was to be a success.

The bamboo, that had lain idle since the Frenchman brought it in was now requisitioned, and to a length of it the neck of the skin was fitted. On the end of the pipe thus made, he moulded a joint of clay, which connected directly with the smaller opening of his furnace, through which a blast of air could now be pumped at will. It was a rough arrangement, born of patience, much planning, several failures and hard work, and before it was completed the day was nearly over.

Starbuck dropped his tools and went up the valley for some distance, calling to the girl that he would be back shortly. She had been so busy with her bark peeling and its disposition in the brook, that the long afternoon had passed quickly for her, and now, wearied with perhaps the first real physical

labour she had ever done, she was glad to rest and await his return. A change from their simple bill of fare, as promised by the pig, was a welcome one, and though she knew the flesh ought to be prepared, she could not bring herself to touch the greasy carcass that lay in the shade of a tree close by. However, Starbuck was soon back, his hands full of small nuts that looked not unlike common buckeyes.

"There's that pig, and I forgot all about him," were his first words as he dropped the nuts at her feet. "While I cut off a roast you peel the shells off those and string them on a cocoanut fibre."

Wondering she obeyed, making a long rope of twenty or more. The meat of the nuts was very oily, she noticed, and she vaguely supposed that they had to do with some new kind of cookery. But Starbuck, nodding approval at the string, paid no further attention to it and having dressed his meat, he buried it in the coals.

In the descending dusk the fire made a cheerful ring of light, and the man, coming and going, concerned in little tasks of the camp, hummed to himself in his preoccupation. His strong, alert figure, his bronzed face, in queer contrast to the white skin of his shoulders and neck, his bare arms, in which the great muscles rippled and coiled under the smooth skin, showing new shapes and shadows with every movement, and withal, his pleasant, clear

cut face, with its direct blue eyes, altogether made a picture that she did not try to keep herself from watching.

The steady plash of the milk-white surf at the foot of the beach and the serenity of the sky as the stars came out, one by one at first, then by constellations and finally in myriads, all combined to give Eleanor Channing a feeling of security, if not of content, which she had not known for what seemed to her an eternity.

Their meal over, they were preparing to retire to their respective huts when Starbuck asked for the rope of nuts. Tying it to a green stick at intervals along its length, he lighted one end in the coals of the dying fire, and to her surprise here was a candle to light her to bed; not a brilliant torch, it was true, but one that burned steadily, giving off a sort of bluish flame, each nut lasting about ten minutes. Digging out a hole in the bottom of an empty cocoanut shell, into which he thrust the butt of the stick, he handed it to her, and cautioning her not to set fire to the roof of her house, he bade her good night.

"I count myself privileged," she said, as he held aside the screen for her to enter, "to be cast away with a genius and an inventor," and nodding brightly to him she disappeared.

The morning found them again busily at work, she with her sennit braiding and he with his fur-

nace, which he had left unfinished. With clay which he had previously baked, pounded to powder and mixed with fresh clay, he made a small crucible into which he put the head of his boathook and the rings by which the sail had been attached to the boat's mast. These, together with some finely broken bits of perfectly dry wood and dead leaves, he sealed up hermetically with a clay cover, and placed the finished crucible on the supports inside his furnace, partly closing the top with clay down to a small aperture some six inches across. The furnace had been filled with dry wood, the pieces being heaped underneath and about the crucible, and now he was ready for the lighting. The girl had watched the last part of his preparations with increasing interest and showed a good grasp of the idea which he explained. It was an old, old process, he said, that had been used in India since time unknown. The product of wrought iron carburized in this fashion was Wootz, he told her, and made, if properly treated, a very pure product highly valued for tools and weapons.

With the fire lighted, Starbuck stood by the bellows and blew his air blast into the flames, which rose about the retort with a roar, leaping finally from the low chimney and spouting sparks that made Miss Channing fear for the safety of her only home. As more fuel was needed she supplied it,

feeding the furnace steadily. In two hours or a little more, Starbuck announced that the process should be complete and the fire was allowed to die out, but the crucible was too hot to touch for some time and the man turned to a new occupation.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT MANNER OF MAN

Miss Channing's need of shoes had become alarmingly apparent, so much so, in fact, that she had taken up the habit of completely concealing her feet as much as possible when he was about, for they were bruised and tender from the rough ground and the sand that continually sifted through the cracked leather.

Picking up the partly dry pig skin, Starbuck, with the sharp edges of two shells, nipped the bristles from the hide. He then kneaded and rubbed and twisted the skin until it was soft, and with his knife, which he had whetted to an edge on a smooth stone, he cut two peculiar shaped pieces and two others of a smaller size. Next, he startled Miss Channing with a demand to see her foot, which she showed with some laughing embarrassment at its present condition, but at the same time thankfully, as she saw that it meant new shoes. From a bit of wood he carved and whittled a rough last and finally, with a thread of twisted hibiscus fibre he stitched a pair of moccasins that would have done no small

credit to a Sioux squaw. Delighted, she slipped them on and while they were scarcely comportable with fashion's law, they were at least far more comfortable than the footwear she had been using.

By now the crucible was cool enough to handle, and lifting it from its bed, Starbuck cracked it open to find in the bottom about three pounds of smooth, hard metal. Hugely pleased, he at once set about building a new arrangement in which to heat his steel to the forging point. With more rocks he built a low structure, connecting his bellows with its under side by means of a new pipe of clay. When the metal was hot he removed it with two sticks to a flat stone that was to serve as an anvil, and beat the sparkling mass with the back of his stone axe until he had flattened out a part which he judged to be a little over two pounds weight. With the girl to hold the stone adze with its edge against the steel, he managed to cut off the piece desired, returning this immediately to the forge.

The problem of shaping the tool now confronted him. With no tongs, the hot metal was difficult to handle, but by prying off the copper band of the broken oar blade, he made a loop of metal, which he attached to a stick, so that by catching the steel in its bight he was able to turn it on the anvil in the process of shaping. Without means to make a hole

in the head of the axe for the admission of a helve, he decided to model the new tool after the stone implement, so that, with a green rawhide lashing, a cleft stick would serve for a handle.

By dint of much labour the tool was finished except for tempering, which was easily done by heating to redness and plunging into a calabash full of water. The axe now needed only to be ground and fitted to its handle to become the keen, serviceable article of which he stood in such need. It was rough, and its balance was imperfect, but for his purpose it was priceless. With its first testing on a tall palm, he was satisfied beyond his greatest hopes, and as the tree came crashing to the ground he noted that the edge had neither turned nor lost its keenness.

Knowing his anxiety to complete the dugout, with some surprise Eleanor saw that with the beginning of the next day he did not turn at once to this work, but taking his axe, disappeared up the beach, returning laden down with bamboo poles. While she was at the stream attending to her soaking bark, she heard him chopping furiously, and great was her surprise when on her return she found, already partly constructed, a verandah for the front of her lodge. The bamboo uprights and rafters, sloping from the roof of the hut far down in a shading canopy, were neatly lashed with sennit

and he had begun to weave a thatch of leaves. She aided in bringing the supply and before noon the shelter was completed. And none too soon, for clouds now began to overspread the sky, and before their luncheon was finished, the downpour began. He was about to retire to his own hut when she invited him to hers and they both took shelter under the newly made porch, occupying themselves for a time by discovering and stopping the leaks that frequently occurred.

The rain continued. There was not much wind but at times the downpour was terrific. It beat upon the beach before them, the drops hollowing out little cups in the sand with their force. Before long the brook, which had until now been a quiet, well-behaved rivulet, swelled into a roaring torrent, whose rush could be heard above the sound of the rain, and which overflowed its banks in places, flooding a part of the glade behind the hut. But the lodge itself stood at the height of the beach and was apparently safe from inundation.

Sitting there together without occupation, a new strangeness seemed to fall upon the man and woman. In the busy hours that had gone before, their conversation seemed to turn itself naturally upon their work, their hopes, their successes and their failures, but now, in this new and enforced proximity of their imprisonment by the elements, there seemed to come

to the man a half embarrassment that kept him silent. She sought to turn the talk to their chances of rescue but his indefinite replies discouraged her and at last she was forced either to find some new topic of mutual interest or to fall herself into an awkward silence.

And here an opportunity presented itself to learn what she had vaguely wondered from time to time. Who was this man, her only friend in the world into which she had been dropped by a strange destiny? What was he? Whence had he come? Whither was he going? What were his traditions, his aims and his ambitions?

"Does it ever occur to you," she said at last, after the pause in their talk had grown to a long interval, "have you ever thought of me, here, alone on an island in the sea with a man of whom I know absolutely nothing? Until after we landed I did not know your name, and even now that is all I know, except, let me see — that you were born in Nantucket; that your mother was a Macy and her mother a Coffin; that you were second officer of the late *Marquesas,* and that you have been sometime in the islands of that name. And that is all," she concluded, with a mock sigh of despair. "It isn't much, is it, for one to know of a person who has saved one's life and —?"

She broke off suddenly, reddening.

Roused by the sound of her voice, Starbuck turned and smiled.

"Well, Miss," he began, but she stopped him with a gesture of impatience.

"Please, Mr. Starbuck," she pleaded, "don't call me 'Miss.' It sounds so like the new footman at home, and besides," she added, smiling at him, "in our present savage state, it seems to me that formalities are impossible. Would you mind if I asked you to call me by my name, Eleanor?"

Starbuck, utterly unprepared, was at a loss how to meet this little show of friendliness and good-fellowship. He had accustomed himself to treat her still as a passenger of the ship, who was to be respected and cared for with delicate attention, and who, if approached in any other attitude would doubtless be entirely justified in showing him his place as a steamer official and in no sense a friend. Conscious now that she was trying to show her trust in him and her appreciation of the great services he had rendered her, Starbuck stammered his willingness, though he made no attempt to use the name.

Seeing his difficulty, she went back to her first approach and asked him to tell her of the place where he had been born.

Thus led out of his embarrassment, Starbuck began easily to tell of his boyhood. It seemed that he had not had much.

"Have you ever been on Nantucket?" he asked. "Well, I was born in one of those queer old cottages with the roofs that slope down almost to the ground behind. My father was captain of a whaler out of New Bedford and I was named for him. As I first remember him he was a kindly old man, more than sixty even when I was a youngster, tall and thin, with a straight back and gray eyes that seemed to look way through you. He was a good father to us boys and girls, I guess, though we didn't see very much of him. His voyages were long ones, and almost every time he came home there would be a new one of us. And it was the newest that got most of his attention.

"There were eight, all told, five boys and three girls, running up a good deal like a flight of stairs. I was next to the oldest and after David went off to sea with Father, 'The Skipper,' we always called him, I was head of the family. Mother was not well the last of her life and the younger ones were a great deal of trouble. Up to fourteen I went to school in the winter and made fishing trips to the Georges in the summer with Uncle Dave. I was cook of a fisherman when I was a dozen years old, and they said I was a good one.

"I never had much schooling after that and when I was fifteen, Mother died."

Starbuck stopped a moment as if in thought.

"She said to me that day," he continued, after a pause, "'John,' she said, 'idleness is the worst of all sins. Work and aim for the top and even if you don't reach it you will be a man.'

"When Father came home from his three years' cruise he found David a berth as second mate of a bark in the South American trade and took me with him in the forecastle. I found out then that Father at home and Father at sea were about as much alike as black and white. He was a driver. You've heard of what they call American hell ships? Well, the *Betsey Coffin* was one, or at least I thought so, never having been on a real voyage before.

"I was a big, strong boy for my age and I did a man's work, hand, reef and steer along with the rest. That I was the skipper's son made no difference, and perhaps it was just as well, for the men that made up that crew would have made my life something to be got rid of. I learned to eat salt horse, and biscuit that the weevils would run from, but I throve on it, I guess, for at the end of two years I was strong as an ox and could hold my own with the best of them. We had hard luck that voyage. Sperm was scarce and the price of oil so low that right whales were hardly worth the taking. But we stuck out till our provisions were gone and then headed around the Horn home. At Pernambuco Father caught the fever and died in port. The

mate took her home, and I was left stranded, with the skipper's lay to be divided among eight. It wasn't much I can tell you.

"Dave was making good and he turned most of his pay in to help out the rest and I did the same. There was enough to pay their board while they went to school, and as my mother's sister took the three youngest and my Uncle Obadiah the other three, they were well enough fixed. I hadn't any great love for a whaler but I had to do something, and the first chance that offered was the ship *Pequot,* Capt. Zenas Lee, bound on a two years' cruise. I shipped as boat steerer and we had good luck. We cruised off the Cape Verdes for a while and when the sperm got running scarce we made across the Line down to Punta Arenas and through the straits.

"We didn't waste much time in the South Pacific, but made for the Alaskan grounds, where we spent the summer, with the try-works mostly going full blast. When it commenced to freeze up there along in the first part of October we went south again and fooled around the groups of islands below the Line, touching now and then in the Gilberts, Samoa, the Fijis and lastly the Marquesas.

"That was where I picked up the little I know about island life. The ship put in for water and fresh meat and fruits, for we had scurvy aboard. We got pretty free shore liberty and the natives

used us well. Another man and I were sent off for a last cask of water just before the ship sailed and while we were gone the consul informed the skipper that small-pox had broken out on the island, Nukahiva, it was, and 'all hands' wasn't too quick for Cap'n Zenas Lee to get his anchor off the bottom and set his courses.

"Marooned, we were, in that place for three months, so I got pretty close to some of the native ways of doing things.

"I worked my passage to Callao in the stoke-hole of a British tramp and from there I made my way somehow to Panama and home in a fruiter. As my lay, or share, in the cargo of the *Pequot* was pretty good money, for she was a full ship when she left Nukahiva, I was anxious to get it, so I waited at home, or rather in my relations' homes, till she was reported, and then went to New Bedford to collect. But the skipper said I'd deserted and refused to settle.

"I went to a lawyer and he wanted me to fix it out of court for a quarter part of what was coming to me. But I was bound I'd have it all or nothing, so I got another lawyer and he took up the case in earnest, wrote to the Nukahiva consul for an affidavit and I don't know what else. Anyway, it was evidently going to be a long time before I got anything, and as I didn't want to go to sea and get

stranded somewhere when the case came to trial, I hung around home, coasting a little, and finally I decided that I'd had enough whaling. I passed my examination for a mate's berth easy enough and got a chance in a fine big schooner in the West Indian trade. They were short voyages and I could keep an eye on my lawsuit between times. It didn't progress very fast, and though I was offered the chief mate's berth I gave it up.

"I thought that my kind of sailoring was getting too slow and I wanted to get into the steam traffic. The only way was to begin pretty near the bottom, and I did, in the fire-room of a Plant liner, between New York and Havana. I worked up pretty well to the engine-room and had some thoughts that I'd like that line of work. But my case was coming off pretty soon then, so I stayed ashore for the winter and got a job in a machine shop and foundry. I won the case right enough and the Old Man had to settle, but the lawyer I had hired saw to it that I didn't suffer any from sudden prosperity, and when it was all over I had just seventy-two dollars and sixteen cents coming to me, and my lay had amounted to over three hundred dollars.

"That sort of sickened me of the land-sharks, and I went to sea again, as third mate of a British tramp that was hard up in Boston. I left her in Liverpool, and went to Australia in another cargo

boat, as second mate, and got my first mate's ticket at the end of the voyage. After that I went in several ships, everywhere, most, where there is a port and trading to be done; the Mediterranean, Suez, Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, the Malay Islands, Manila, Japan, all around the world and back again. I got tired, then, of the cargo boats and when I got my master's certificate I tried for a passenger berth, but there was no chance, and the only way for me to get on was to drop back and take a fresh start; so I got in with the South Pacific people at San Francisco and made three trips in the *Marquesas* before she went to the bottom out there and marooned you and me and the Frenchman here 'with a shifty trick unkind,'" he quoted as he finished.

For a little time the girl sat silent. It was a commonplace enough story, but he told it well, not lauding himself in any way, slurring quickly over the many adventures he must have had, making a category of his life, straightforward and simple.

"I should call that a story of success," said the girl finally. "I should think you had done well. In all that rough life you must have learned a great deal of men, and of the world and its ways. You talk, too, like a man who has thought and read. You have, haven't you? Why, you quoted Kipling just now."

She stopped in surprise as she placed the words that had ended his tale.

"Yes," he laughed, "I could recite the whole rhyme. It's one of the things that stick, isn't it?"

"And," pursued Eleanor, "you don't talk a bit like the sailors in books."

He laughed again.

"You mean that I don't say 'shiver my timbers' and 'belay there?' Well, I could, and when I'm with men of my craft I suppose I use as much sea lingo as the next, but since I've worn buttons and a brass-bound cap I've tried to drop the tramp slang and the whalers' talk and speak as much like my passengers as I can. The day of the old salt with his forelock and his bow and scrape is over; along with the Old Three-Decker, he's off for the Islands of the Blest and the day of the new romance has come. I don't always want to be a second officer and if the *Marquesas* had made San Francisco on her last trip I was going out first on the next."

"And now?" queried the girl.

"Now, I'm a sort of twentieth-century reprint of a much read work by a Mr. Defoe with a Lady Friday and a lot of work on hand that is suffering to be done," he stated, as he rose quickly and looked out at the hurtling rain.

His movement told her that their conversation for the time was over and she rose and joined him as

he stood under the dripping eaves of the verandah.

Towards night the rain ceased and the stars came out in the clean-washed sky, and with them in the west was the silver crescent of a young moon, that sailed awhile in the azure heavens and then dipped her modest daintiness below the waves.

CHAPTER XII

THE RAISING OF THE DINGHY

With renewed vigour Starbuck set to work in earnest on the dugout. With his axe he was able to shape the bow and stern, so that at last the log began to look more like a craft. The hollowing out was slow, hard work at best but by constant labour both with fire and tools, using his axe as an adze, the tool being easily made to serve by a simple change of handle, the interior was gradually enlarged until the sides were less than two inches in thickness. The boat being perfectly round on the bottom, and probably so irregular that it could not by any possibility trim itself, Starbuck used the natural expedient of the island people in the form of an outrigger, which was a sharpened log of buoyant wood, shorter than the canoe and lashed with sennit to spars which crossed from gunwale to gunwale and projected several feet to one side. While unnecessary from a native point of view, Starbuck was a good enough sailor to be dissatisfied with anything but a shipshape craft, and desired to mortise his spars into his outrigger. To do this

he needed a chisel and at once set about making one of a part of the steel left from the forging of the axe.

He also felt strongly the need of better forge fuel than the dry wood and foresaw that with the continuing rains even this would become unfit for use. To this end he constructed, with little trouble, a charcoal pit and in a few days had an excellent supply.

Another article of civilization that both the girl and he had sorely missed was soap, and Starbuck, familiar with the process he had seen so many times in his boyhood days, bethought him of the means to supply this insistent demand. Although a makeshift composed of cocoanut oil and a simple lye of wood ashes could be easily supplied, he knew that this was only fit for use with salt water, and as neither cared to use the sea for toilet purposes he cast about him for the materials with which to make something better. The agreeable odour of the candle nuts attracted him, and by experimenting he soon found that by means of pressure he could obtain the supply of oil he needed. Caustic potash was a harder problem, slaked lime being needed in its making. For a time this puzzled him, but suddenly he remembered that the shells and corals all about them must hold a high percentage of calcium and that it would only be necessary to carbonate this

by burning. His furnace, minus the forcing draft, would answer the purpose of a kiln and forthwith he filled it with sea shells and broken coral rock in layers, with dry wood and charcoal between and set the pile alight. The result was imperfect, perhaps, so far as purity was concerned, but the lime slaked well and, for his purposes, was as good as the civilized product. Its future usefulness for mortar also occurred to him, but as he had no place for storing he contented himself with one burning.

The girl found kiln tending somewhat arduous work but it was a new occupation and a welcome relief from idleness, as the sennit rope she had made was now sufficient. While the kilns were kept burning Starbuck managed some pots and bowls of clay, which, as soon as the furnace was free of lime, he baked and even glazed by the aid of a charcoal fire and his bellows blast. He had not yet told the girl the significance of all these activities, for he thought failure quite possible and feared to disappoint her. During the pressing of the nuts, which she helped to gather, she questioned him more than once, but he put her off with laughing replies and conditional promises of a surprise in store.

Simple potash, or the carbonate, was now obtained by evaporating a solution of wood ashes, leached with water, and burning the residue to eliminate the charcoal. This was in turn made into

a solution with about twelve parts of water as nearly as he could judge, and set on to boil in a shallow basin. The quicklime, slaked to a paste, was added slowly until with the acid of fermented palm sap no effervescence occurred. The solution was allowed to settle, the clear liquor drawn off and boiled to concentration.

"Chemistry," said the girl, as she followed the various steps of this work, "is something I never could grasp. It seemed to me just a senseless jumble of capital letters and little numerals, far worse than the string of letters after an English scholar's name, but you seem to have been able to make it work for you, and without the capitals."

"But," he replied, "this isn't chemistry, it's soap."

"Oh," she cried, "you've let the cat out of the bag. But I'm so delighted! Think of being able to wash one's clothes again!"

"Again?" he queried, with a lifted eyebrow.

She laughed.

"I'm afraid," she said, "this is a case where the shame lies in a plea of innocence. But," she added, with a glance at her soiled raiment, "I could do anything to be clean again, though I never expected to be obliged to make my own soap."

With one of the larger bowls full of candle nut oil, Starbuck brought it slowly to a boiling tempera-

ture and added a weak solution of his caustic potash, stirring constantly. Gradually the strength of the lye was increased and the mixture lost its milky appearance and became clear. More lye was added until the taste was distinctly alkaline, and Starbuck announced that the liquor was ready for "salting out." A strong brine of boiled sea-water served the purpose, and as it entered the solution the soapy matter could be seen collecting on top while the spent lye was precipitated. Skimming while hot and pouring into halves of cocoanut shells to set, completed the work, and the castaways found themselves the possessors of a number of cakes of excellent soap, fragrant and agreeable with the odour of the oil. With the rough pottery basins for tubs, wash day now could be regularly observed, adding much to the comfort and self-respect of both.

The weather, much to Starbuck's surprise, held fine, facilitating greatly the completion of the canoe, which, in less than a week, was finished and ready for launching. With his axe and a knife he turned out some very creditable paddles, one of them small and light enough for the girl to use. Under log rollers the craft was run down to the water's edge and Starbuck was about to send it on its first dip into the Pacific when he halted as if something had been forgotten.

"We can't let this ship go overboard without a

name, even if we haven't any champagne to break over her bow. You must name her," he said, smiling at the girl, "and as the owner I choose the name. She shall be the *Eleanor,* and good luck to her."

So they launched and christened their craft, built with such pains and labour, and on that quiet afternoon in early April they paddled on their first voyage.

Naturally, Starbuck first made a visit to the reef where the ship's dinghy lay inside the great coral barrier. As they paddled out from the shore the water gradually deepened, though the bottom could still be seen distinctly, each shell and almost each grain of sand showing clear-cut beneath the still surface. The wonderful colours, which had not been visible from the shore, made the girl cry out in delight as they passed over beds of deep purple, shaded into violet, yellow and blue, with patches of red and orange, brilliant and glowing. Fish darted here and there, and Starbuck now and then pointed with his paddle at a huge albicore or a bonito, startled by their approach. He kept a sharp lookout for the sinister, black, triangular fin of a shark above the water, but none disturbed the repose of the peaceful lagoon, which seemed to smile a welcome to them.

Turning to look at the shore the girl saw for the

first time since she had christened the island, the red and yellow blanket-flag, that together they had hoisted on the peak. It was still there, floating out bravely in the breeze that fanned the summit, still calling its silent message to the broad Pacific. The island itself, with its white fringe of beach backed by the waving, feathery cocoa-palms, with the land rising in a terrace of greenery, looked like a picture of fairyland. Beauty in some form lay on every hand and the girl fell into a dreamy reverie under its spell.

She was sharply recalled by an exclamation from Starbuck, who now, with a few swift strokes of his paddle, made the canoe forge ahead. He pointed downward with the blade, and there on the bottom was the thing they sought, the boat. It lay on its side, with the sand sifted over the gunwale into the bottom, covering up any injury that may have been sustained by striking the sharp coral of the reef. In the limpid water it seemed as if they could touch it with the paddle, but Starbuck knew it must be at least ten fathoms below. He carefully studied the boat's position in relation to the black wall of the reef, which, only a few yards beyond, formed a solid barrier that even caused the mighty Pacific in its wildest moods to halt and turn back. And the girl remembered, as she gazed, her youthful geography, which taught her that these reefs were made by a

myriad of tiny polyps, who had lived and died in countless generations to build that Titan's wall. The crest of the reef was now just awash, and the surf, with the wind hauled to the southwest, was absent.

Starbuck drew a thin, braided line from his pocket, and with a stone for a weight, sounded the bottom, measuring off the depth with the spread of his arms. Nine fathoms he counted before the line grew slack, and he wondered how long he could stand the pressure of nearly two atmospheres. He had seen the native pearl divers make nothing of such a depth, but as for himself he had his doubts. But he said nothing of them nor of his plan for raising the boat, and they quietly continued their voyage along the northerly shore of the island until the freshening wind warned them not to make the complete circle in an unaccustomed craft.

Starbuck had brought a wooden hook he had contrived from a root, and with this and his line they spent an hour fishing, taking several small bonitos, which the man knew to be excellent eating. As they paddled back, their craft, rough and clumsy though it was, seemed to have opened to them an entire new world and they felt rich in its possession.

As the southwest monsoon had not become settled, Starbuck did not yet wish to attempt to carry out his idea of getting up the dinghy, which

would involve much work on the reef itself, so he contented himself with his preparations. He now needed a saw very badly, but was in complete despair of obtaining the article, until, as he was overhauling the sail preparatory to rigging the canoe, he stumbled across the water breaker, for which they had found no immediate use. The iron hoops that strongly bound the keg were, it flashed across him, the supply of metal he so much needed.

Joyful at his discovery and blaming himself for his stupidity, he set to work to repeat his process of steel making, and profiting by his previous attempt, succeeded in turning out a very creditable product. Beaten thin with the back of his steel axe, and the teeth stamped out laboriously with a three-cornered die of chilled metal, the result was a saw, at which a carpenter might have smiled, but which would cut wood if the user were patient. With his axe and saw and chisel Starbuck now was able to make a set of serviceable blocks, both double and single, the sheaves being sections of young cocoanut trunks, bored for their pins by burning.

The problem of sufficient rope for this tackle now presented itself, and the sailor set about solving it with a seaman's readiness. The husks stripped from many nuts had been decaying in the stream bed, and furnished a mass of loose fibre ready for his purpose. With a spun yarn winch, constructed

of bamboo, and the girl to twirl the shaft, he spun the long strands, which, twisted in an improvised rope-walk between two tree trunks, and hawser laid, gave him all the cordage needed and of a kind that was perfectly strong and serviceable.

The work was interrupted once or twice by violent storms, which swept the island with a deluge of rain and drove both man and girl to shelter for a day at a time. Coming from the southwest, the wind drove the water roaring through the break in the reef, lowering the height of the lagoon appreciably, and Starbuck was concerned lest the scour carry the sunken boat beyond the protection of the reef, where it might be lost to him for ever. But an investigation, as soon as the weather had moderated, showed him that the craft still lay as it had been, though more nearly buried in the shifting sands. While the man had been engaged in the preparations for his wrecking operations the girl had not been idle. The need of clothes was now becoming so urgent that steps had to be taken to refurnish both their wardrobes. Every trip to the interior of the island resulted in some new rent, and the one needle they possessed was in constant demand until the clothes they wore were so full of mends that the remaining cloth would hardly hold together. The shrinkage caused by this constant patching, unaided by new material, was alarming, and it was evident

that a new supply of cloth was one of the first considerations.

The hibiscus bark, that had been alternately soaked in the brook and exposed to the air, was now, they found, in a state of decomposition which Starbuck pronounced far enough advanced to free the fibres, and he showed her how, with a billet of wood about a foot long and two inches square, creased in grooves of varying depth upon the four sides, to beat the strips of bark, which were placed on the smooth trunk of a fallen cocoa palm, adding new strips and moistening the mass with water as needed. The result of continued effort, more monotonous than difficult, was a cloth of fair quality, that could be made in varying thickness as desired by beating out as a gold-beater finishes his sheets of metal. Finally, bleached in the tropical heat of the sun, a fabric of dazzling whiteness was ample reward, and her pride at her usefulness was not lessened by the praise of the man.

Starbuck had made a pair of sheers of two young trees, about fifteen feet in length, lashed at the crossing with stout sennit and braced at the bottom with spreader, making a rigid letter A, to the apex of which was attached a set of double blocks. He tested the tackle's lifting power and found it to be apparently ample.

On a bright morning, with the wind apparently

settled in the southwest, with rigging ready and the sheers towing behind, the man and girl set out to begin operations on the reef. In the lee of the island the water was calm. The top of the great coral shelf was just exposed and they could see the half-buried dinghy below, lying like a dead thing on the bottom. The girl was aware of Starbuck's hopes from the possession of his craft, but she did not share his enthusiasm. Her former experience in this same boat was still vivid in her memory, and deep in her heart she preferred to remain in comparative comfort on the island, to tempting fortune again on the bosom of the Pacific — the Pacific, which now, lying idly kissed by the warm sun, seemed all mildness and smiles, but which she had seen in one short hour transform itself into a frothing whirl of angry tumult, gray, hissing and venomous, destroying all that fell within its embrace, shouting aloud its eternal treachery.

However, she said nothing of her thoughts to Starbuck, whose mind she knew was firmly set upon accomplishing his purpose. She watched his preparations interestedly. He was in his element as a wrecker and went about his work with a certain definiteness that had not marked him in his activities ashore.

First of all he set up his sheers on the edge of the reef. To do this was no small task. The green

wood was heavy, and powerful man as he was, his strength was not sufficient to place the poles upright. Paddling ashore they brought back two large stones, which Starbuck proceeded to lash to the butts of the poles with a hitch that could be loosened with a single jerk of a rope's end. The sheers now up-ended with the butts in the water, and the weights ballasting them, the structure rode upright like a buoy beside the reef.

Measuring the distance carefully, he bent a rope at the crossing of the sheers, leading it back to connect with a gun-tackle purchase, which was anchored securely to a projection of the reef itself. Two guy lines were also bent in readiness to hold the sheers in position. A stout spar, the length of the sheers, he now set into the throat lashing, the butt to be planted on the reef at the instant the sheers stopped rising, to act as a stay against the pull of the guys and to stop the dead weight from falling back. When all was ready a sharp pull released the ballasting rocks and the lightened structure shot up perpendicularly, to be caught and held by the spar as he had foreseen. The sailor now had small difficulty in levering the legs, one after the other, upon the reef's edge, and at last the sheers stood in position, the tackle hanging out over the water directly above the sunken dinghy.

Eleanor, who was unable to assist in this work,

had remained in the canoe, but now she was called upon for aid. Starbuck slipped off his shoes and made ready a rope with a heavy stone for a sinker.

"What are you going to do now?" she asked.

"Well," he answered, "I don't know whether I'm man enough or not, but I'm going down there, if I can, and hook on this tackle."

She looked at him as he stood on the reef, brown of face and arm and neck, strong, buoyant, with a boyish smile on his lips and a light of daredeviltry in his blue eyes. For an instant she compared him with the men that she had known; with the man she had promised to marry. Would any of them, she wondered, do for her sake what this man was doing? Could any of them do what he was doing, or, lacking knowledge, would they have been the men to try makeshift expedients, the products of their own imaginations, in an attempt to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles? Running rapidly through her list of friends, she could think of none who possessed the unselfishness or the offhand courage of this man, who, a few weeks before had been an utter stranger to her.

The thought, now, of his going down into that deep, blue water terrified her. If he should be drowned through some mishap; if he should die before her eyes and she should never be able to speak to him again! It was not a selfish thought

that flashed through her mind, but the personal appeal of his own self as a friend and as a loyal companion, who stood ready to sacrifice his life for her if need be, and who, under her helpless trust in him, had already more than once proved the steel of his honour.

"Are you sure you will be safe?" she anxiously asked, as he stepped into the canoe beside her. "If anything should happen —"

"Nothing will happen," he said. "The worst will be that I may fail to reach bottom."

He slipped the great stone over the side and tested the rope that held it hanging in the water. He took a turn with the line around one of the outrigger spars and handed it to her.

"Now," he said, "I am going down feet first standing on the weight and you must pay out quickly, for I can't be long. The water is pretty deep and the pressure will be hard to stand."

As he spoke he took in his hands the tackle block, to the lower end of which was attached a small, stiff billet of wood to be thrust as a toggle through the ring bolt at the stern of the dinghy. He drew out his knife, which he placed between his teeth, and grasping the rope with one hand and the block with the other, swung over the side.

Down, down he went in the perfectly clear, still water, his foreshortened body showing squat and

strange in its outline. Quickly she paid out the line as he descended, but after a moment it went more slowly, as the greater depth of water was reached. Then it stopped altogether and in surprise she saw him rushing up toward her. Faster and faster the figure came, kicking its way to the surface, the head and shoulders popping out suddenly. The man's breath released with a puff, and clinging to the side of the canoe before climbing in, he panted a moment, shaking his ringing ears and filling his poisoned lungs in great gasps.

"I've got to get my breath better," he said, as he drew up his dripping body and sat on the spar. "It's kind of close down there."

"Are you going to try again?" asked the girl, as he began hauling at the line.

"I think I can make it next time," he replied. "Let the line run pretty free. It will snub itself before it gets to the bottom. I wish the weight was heavier."

Now he took several great breaths, filling up and emptying his chest, purifying each cell to receive its utmost supply of life-giving oxygen. At last he slipped into the water again, and taking a long, natural breath, signalled her to let him go. Down he went, faster this time, until it seemed as if he would never stop. She watched him. He was nearly at the bottom, she thought, but no, the line

was still running. Now it stopped. She saw him fumble with the toggle, and, after what seemed an age, finally pass it through the ring.

He straightened, crouched on the bottom and sprang upward. At the instant a shadow fell across his body. There was a swirl of a swiftly passing shape, and frozen with terror, she saw the great flukes of a tiger shark. She tried to scream but her voice had lost its power. She could only watch, helpless, powerless to warn him. But he had noticed. He was swimming desperately toward the top when the shape turned, and darting close, almost flicked him with its tail, the mass of disturbed water twisting his body half round and almost stopping his ascent. She saw him seize the knife from between his teeth. Half way to the surface the great fish swooped again, and to her utter horror she saw the white of its upturned belly and the rows of cruel teeth in the wide open gap of its jaws.

Aiming straight for the man's body it came swift as a dart, its tail almost motionless, its instincts concentrated on its prey. Starbuck turned, doubling his body downward. An arm shot up and she caught the flash of steel. The next instant the great fish was gone, and the man, face purple, with blue lips and starting eyeballs, shot up out of the sea.

Almost exhausted, he climbed into the canoe and

lay in the bottom, his head in the girl's lap where she had raised it, he fighting for air, she sobbing in her fright and crying out her thankfulness at his escape. For a few moments Starbuck did not move. A weakness seized him and he lay as one in a swoon until his blood quickened as the heart beat stronger. Slowly he sat up and looked about. His shirt of shreds was torn and split and hung about his waist, exposing his heaving chest with its great rounded muscles.

"That was as close to it as I've ever been," he said, without a smile, "but it's all right. I've done the trick."

"You were frightened," he said presently, leaning over and laying a wet hand on the girl's arm. "I don't wonder. I was myself," and he turned sharply in the direction of a splash in the water. "Look there," he cried, touching the girl again. "There he is, and in his flurry. See my knife, sticking in his side!"

But the girl covered her face with her hands and would not look.

"It was horrible, horrible!" she sobbed. "I thought — Oh, those awful teeth!"

"There, there," he said in a clumsy effort at helping her to regain herself. "It's all over now and I shall save my knife too. See! He is dead, already."

Casting off the line that held the canoe to the reef, he paddled to the body of the shark, and taking a turn around the tail, worked the craft ashore, Eleanor sitting rigid in her place, striving to control herself.

With an eye on the weather, Starbuck anxiously watched her, wondering if it was better to go on with his salving of the boat or whether he might risk the interference of a storm, and the possible undoing of his work. He decided that he could not, and after drawing up the great fish on the beach, he turned to go again to the reef. But she sprang before him, white, trembling from head to foot, but refusing to let him go alone, and though he could see that she was shaken by nearly overmastering terror, he did not change his purpose. He explained that if the wind should rise it might all have to be done again; and then, with fine courage, she took her place in the canoe, saying that if he must go she would accompany him. He marvelled at the strength of this delicate woman, the strength that was able to overcome deadly fear and send her to share with him whatever peril lay in store.

Pushing out quickly to the reef, he made sure that his tackle was fast and stepped out on the shelf, now ankle deep with the risen tide, and grasping the fall, put his weight upon it. The give of the

new rope at first prevented the breaking out of the boat from the sand-bed, but after much effort the purchase of the double blocks began to tell, and swaying with a turn around the brace, he gained a few inches at each heave. Finally the dead weight tore itself free, turned over, as he had planned, and emptying out the load of sand, rose slowly through the water. Up it came, till the white painted stern showed above the surface and the fall was made fast.

While the purchase of Starbuck's tackle was sufficient to raise the boat through the water, it was not powerful enough to continue its work with the weight above the surface. This he had foreseen, and turning to his gun-tackle, he hove on it, bringing the sheers themselves to a perpendicular, with the effect of dragging the dinghy over the edge of the reef, where, by slackening away its own tackle it was at last safely deposited.

He examined the craft anxiously, and Eleanor watched his face grow grave as he looked long at the great hole near the bow, torn through the iron bottom by the jagged points of coral rock. The metal was twisted and split and the riveted seams were opened and sprung for half her length. Starbuck gave a sigh and passed his hand across his forehead.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It's no good," he replied after a pause. "It's all for nothing, all this," and he swept a gesture toward the derrick upon which he had spent so much toil. "I never can patch that hole," he said in a strained voice, "not in a million years."

The girl gave a little sigh of sympathy at his disappointment, for, though in her heart she was glad to escape the fearsome voyage the boat might have meant, she felt for him at the failure of his great hopes.

"But," she said, "we can tow it ashore and you will have metal to make all kinds of tools, and perhaps you could build a boat, larger and better even than this."

"Good, you're a thoroughbred. You'd put heart in a dead man," he exclaimed, striking his hard palms together in resolution. "You always have to show me the way at last."

Hauling the boat up bow first at the junction of the outrigger spar and the gunwale of the canoe, and with the sheers and tackle towing behind, they slowly made the shore, where they beached the dinghy beyond the reach of the sea and turned their attention to their evening meal.

While he was engaged in their simple cookery she disappeared for a few moments, and when she came from the lodge it was with something white in her hands. Wondering, Starbuck looked up, and

as he saw what it was he became hotly conscious of his half naked condition.

"And you made this for me?" he said, taking from her what she held forth. "And out of your sheet," he added as the little sacrifice occurred to him.

It was a shirt, neatly made, and the best fitting he had ever owned, he declared as he came from his hut a few moments later proudly wearing it. And as he thanked her roundly the warm colour flew to her cheeks again and the shock of her great fright departed.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE BONDS OF SERVICE

THE southwest monsoon was now well established, bringing with it heavy rains and warmer days. Plant life seemed to take heart in the moisture and heat, and the vegetation on the island grew rank and tall. One day, while making a circuit of the lagoon in the canoe, which he had fitted with the dinghy's sail, Starbuck spied on the south shore, several large turtles, basking in the sun and evidently preparing to deposit their eggs. Aware that if disturbed they might quit the beach for good, he forbore to land and contented himself with noting the position of the spot. On the following day he returned and found a large number of eggs buried in the sand, which he carried carefully home, a welcome and delicious addition to the evening menu.

To vary their diet Starbuck had made a careful exploration of every part of the island, and greatly to his satisfaction he found that the natives, who had been driven off by the eruption, had evidently been of the more thrifty sort, for near the buried village he discovered evidences of cultivation of the

taro plant, one of the most nutritious and delicate of the vegetable foods of the Pacific islands. Digging up several of the bulbous roots, he wrapped them, with their soil, in plantain leaves and carried them to the valley, where he set them out, carefully watering and tending them. They flourished well, and repeating the experiment many times, he soon had a patch large enough for his needs.

The root of the plant, though acrid to the taste when raw, was mild and pleasant when baked, and after being crushed and fermented, becomes the famous poi, which is perhaps the national dish of the Hawaiians and many other peoples of the ocean world. It was nothing new to Starbuck, who ate it with a relish, but with Eleanor it was an acquired taste. The peculiar flavour, at first, was disagreeable, but after a few trials she began to find its good points, and the taro patch rapidly became one of their chief assets.

Starbuck found that the plant needed much water, and to save labour dug irrigating ditches from the stream. While at work on these he hit upon the plan of bringing water direct to the camp by means of bamboo pipes, with the joints set in clay. This was accomplished, to the delight of Eleanor, who had taken upon herself the laborious duty of providing fresh water, along with her other culinary activities.

Starbuck now bethought him of a store of food against any possible failure of the supply. While this did not seem at all likely, he knew that the breadfruit tree sometimes refused to bear abundantly, and taro, in certain seasons, was difficult to grow. Accordingly he gathered a large quantity of ripe breadfruits, which were separately deprived of their rinds and cores and worked with a pestle to a doughy consistency. Wrapped in leaves, small packages of this were buried in the earth to be used at need, the only final preparation being to bake the parcels just as they were. The baked fruit, mixed with water, turned into a rather stringy mixture that looked not unlike Welsh rarebit and was another form of poi, very good, when one became accustomed to it.

The herd of pigs, upon which they had made frequent requisition of late, was still numerous and seemed to be multiplying. They were in no sense tame, and two of the boars which Starbuck had met on his excursions had been strongly inclined to show fight. For his own protection and that of the girl he had forged out of iron from the boat, two spear-heads, which, equipped with shafts made of the light, tough ribs of cocoanut leaves, were efficient weapons for hunting or for defence. He taught Eleanor how to balance and throw, and by practice the girl became nearly as expert as he. And there

came a day when her ability was put to the test.

The two had been on a visit to the other side of the island, and were returning, contrary to their usual custom, across country. They had climbed the steep bed of lava that led to the top of the volcanic hill, for the purpose of resetting their flagstaff, which had been thrown down in a gusty wind the day before. As they descended on the other side, and emerged from the canebrake, through which Starbuck hewed a way with his axe, they saw, barely half a dozen yards away, rooting peacefully, the largest boar they had yet encountered. He was a fierce looking beast, with small red eyes, a bristly ridge along his back, and tusks that curled wickedly from his jaw.

At their approach the boar threw up his head with a grunt of inquiry, but instead of running or moving off, he continued to stand directly in their path, defiantly prepared to dispute their passage. With axe poised for a blow, Starbuck advanced, intending to split the animal's head with a stroke. The girl, just behind him, hearing a sudden rush, laid a cautioning hand on his shoulder, and as she saw her warning unheeded, balanced her spear in readiness, should the man miss his aim.

After a few steps, expecting every moment to see the pig turn, Starbuck jumped forward and dealt a

lightning blow with his weapon. The boar, quick as a panther, dodged the steel and leaped straight for the man, who, taken unawares, slipped on a slimy root and fell prone on his back. With chin erected and head lowered, the angry brute made a rush, as Starbuck, partly recovering himself, seized the axe that had slid from his hand and endeavoured to ward off the attack. A glancing blow, awkwardly delivered, caught the pig on the shoulder, turning him aside for an instant, but the next he returned to the fight with dripping jaws, his tusks lowered to rip the vitals of the enemy before him. Starbuck, struggling to his knees, seemed almost helpless to defend himself against this second assault and had raised his axe for a last desperate stroke, when, swift as light, something flashed by his head, and Eleanor Channing's spear buried itself behind the boar's foreshoulder.

With a squeal of rage and pain the beast dropped to its knees, struggled once to rise, took a step forward and rolled over in its death spasm.

Starbuck, on his feet in an instant, caught the girl's two hands between both his own and poured out in quick words, his thanks and his pride in her.

"As quick, as cool, as brave," he cried, "as any man I know. You've saved my life, Miss — Miss — Eleanor, and now we're quits."

"No," she contradicted him, though by this time

she was atremble with excitement, "only half quits. I owe you still another life — and more."

Starbuck dragged the dead boar to the camp, and as she followed, a new and strange feeling grew in her heart. It was a sense of power, of strength, of self-reliance. She could kill! It was the first life she had ever taken, and the knowledge that she was able to protect herself in danger, to hold her own in single combat with a dangerous beast, brought an exaltation that was utterly foreign to her. She gloried in her prowess, and she glowed with pleasure at the man's praise.

As the days went by Starbuck became vaguely aware of the change in her. Something, that before had held him at a distance and made him feel that he was only some one who was of use, and who could not, for the time being, be dispensed with; something that had been holding her aloof from him, now seemed to dissolve between the two and leave them nearer to each other, more companionable, more in each other's confidence, and more alike in thought and action. It was not that she extended to him any thought of a closer intimacy, but her manner toward him changed. She asked his advice in many little things, personal things, and talked of her own affairs, her cookery, her dress, and one day even of her toilet.

They had been fishing all one long, hot after-

noon in the lagoon. The strong rays of the high sun beat down on them without mercy, and in the lee of the high island there was not enough breeze to stir the water. When they returned, she complained of feeling faint and dizzy, and lay down for a time in her hut. She ate little that night, partaking only of the boiled greens they made from the tops of the taro plants. As this was unusual in her, Starbuck anxiously inquired if she were ill. She responded, a little weakly, that her head felt dull and painful, but that she would no doubt be right again in the morning.

Satisfied that there was nothing serious amiss they parted as usual for the night, and the next day, though the symptoms had almost entirely disappeared, he opened the subject.

"I shouldn't have kept you out there in the sun yesterday," he said, "and without a hat, too. You must have nearly cooked your brains."

"I think I must," she answered, putting her hands to her head. "My head feels hot, even now, and my hair is so dry that it crackles when I touch it."

Her hair was indeed in bad condition. The sun had bleached it from its darker shade to a tawny yellow, and it was rough, wiry and dull with the burning it had suffered.

"What you need is some of the Marquesan

remedy," he said. "The girls in those islands go bareheaded, always, but they take care of their hair very carefully, and they have beautiful heads of it."

"Well," she replied, "we've never needed a pharmacy on Starbuck Island before, but if you can produce the remedy I should be glad to use it."

And Starbuck straightway did. Pounding the meat of several cocoanuts, he placed it in a calabash with holes punched in its bottom, and set the dish in the hot sun over a bowl to catch the dripping oil that exuded. This he clarified by boiling, but here her objection to its sweet, sickish odour led her to protest.

"If you intend me to use that on my hair," she said, "you need take no more trouble, for I could never stand that smell."

"No?" he mocked. "Wait until I am through."

She watched him doubtfully as he went about picking the jasmine flowers that grew everywhere in the utmost profusion, and began to show more interest as he placed them on a mat of heavy tappa cloth, which he had previously soaked in the oil of the candle nut. Oil and flowers were renewed from time to time, and at last, when the former was pressed from the cloth, it gave a sweet, fragrant compound, the very essence of the blossom's delicate perfume. This was mixed with the cocoanut oil

and the whole sealed in the shell of a nut, which Starbuck called the moo tree nut. In a day or two the contents had absorbed from the shell a pungent odour, which, combined with that of the jasmine, made a perfume that she pronounced delicious.

"It's the sun on the back of your neck that is dangerous," counselled Starbuck, "and if I were you I should wear my hair over it."

Forthwith she retired with her new unguent, and when she came forth her hair was no longer coiled tightly on her head as he had heretofore seen it, but caught loosely below her neck in a thick, soft, shining braid that fell to her hips, where the ends curled crisply.

She looked so girlish in her new guise that the man could hardly repress an exclamation. She noticed his glance, and laughingly pirouetted a few steps, her skirt caught up in either hand, the long plait swinging over her shoulder as she whirled.

"I feel just sixteen again," she cried. "Is it becoming?"

"Very," he smiled in frank admiration of the glowing tresses, no longer rough, but smooth as silk, and shot with gleams of sunlight.

As time went on and no sail appeared to break the blue expanse of the Pacific, they grew less and less to think, with recurring hope, of their rescue. The peace of the island, the warm, genial days and

nights, the abundance of food, and interest in their daily occupations, caused at last a sort of contentment to creep into the heart of each. Their ways had fallen together, and as the days grew to weeks, and the weeks to months, the edge of their actual desolation was dulled and they became absorbed in their own existence. Still, in the heart of the man there was something sadly amiss. As he came and went in his round of duties he watched her at her various feminine occupations, and as the man of the far gone ages might have done, he was at pains to think of the things that might give her pleasure. Once he brought her a pearl that he had found in the shell of an oyster, dredged up from the depths of the lagoon; another time he surprised her with the present of a comb, delicately made from the shell of a great hawk-bill turtle. Many little things he did which she accepted with a quiet appreciation that none the less conveyed to him her pleasure.

Sitting one rainy day under the deep verandah of her house, she sought again to draw from him more of his life. Little details of his various adventures had naturally escaped him from time to time; people he had known, both men and women; dangers that he had faced, difficulties overcome.

"It seems strange," he said, as he rose to a bait

she cunningly offered, "strange, that of all the things that have happened in my life, none of them has ever made me feel like this."

Seeing that such a beginning might possibly lead to more serious things than she had anticipated, she sought her mind for a means of diverting its course, but she found herself merely with the question, "What do you mean?" upon her lips.

"Why," he answered, "I mean this is the first time in my whole life that I have had a chance to think. Really think, I mean, about big things; about ambition, and how to make myself more than I am. I used to believe," he went on, twisting a ribbon of tappa cloth between his strong fingers, "that when I could walk the deck of my own liner with gold lace to my elbows, and sit at table with the best looking women, and patronize passengers with silly compliments, that then I should be at the top of all my hopes. I used to think of that through the nights when I was watching the stars from the bridge of a dirty tramp, and I used to think it when I saw some big P. & O. boat pushing her nose into the canal at Port Said. And I thought that I was on the way to just that when they promised me the chief's berth on the old *Marquesas* that lies out there, but now —"

"Now?" she echoed as he paused.

"Why, now my ambition is so much bigger than

that, that it seems almost too far away ever to reach."

He stopped and sat silent a long time, and she did not ask him what his ambition was.

"Tell me, won't you," she said at last, "of some of the people you have had for friends. You must have met and known a great many in your life."

"Friends?" he questioned. "I don't know that I have had many friends. There was an engineer, once, of a cargo boat I was mate in, that I thought was a friend. We shared a cabin together for nearly the whole of a voyage to Australia and back. He was a Scotchman and I thought him one of the best. I would have trusted my life to him anywhere, but on our run home we touched at San Francisco and got to seeing the town a little. I guess it was a gay night, but the last I remembered was trying to fight off a deadly sleeping-drug as I felt my 'friend's' red, bristly beard against my face as he leaned over and went through my pockets. When I came to again the ship had sailed, and I was left on the Barbary Coast with just the clothes I stood in. That was one friendship!"

"Why," he asked, suddenly turning to her, "why is it that you want me to talk about myself? It is mostly a story of low adventures that you should not wish to hear. Suppose I told it all; all the things I can remember. About the carousals in

ports with men not fit for you even to think of, and women — women that a girl like you ought not to more than guess at. What good would it do you to hear about them? There is nothing about you that has anything in common with that sort of life. Why, that, all of that, is what I want to put behind. I've been as wild as any, I suppose. I knew no better. Young, I was, and full of spirits and dare-deviltry, and in those old days if I did what I am ashamed to speak of now, I confess it and I want only to forget."

"Why!" he cried, facing her and leaning forward in his earnestness, "you are the only good woman I have ever known. Think of that! The only one in a lifetime, and it seems like a sort of dream, even now, that I should know you as I do; one of the women I have always looked up at from way down below, and wondered what they were like. I can't tell you what it's meant to me! Just being with you and hearing you and seeing you! And you asked me to call you by your name. That was the sweetest moment of all. I wonder if you know that."

She was not looking at him now, but with her eyes cast down, sat motionless, her breast rising and falling, sweetly, with her quickly caught breath.

"Some day," he went on, quietly, but with a deep note of gentleness in his voice, "some day,

after we have left this place, and after I am able, I am coming to you and ask you if all this, — all that we have lived through together here is to mean nothing, or whether we have grown so close just to be cheated at the end of whatever happiness there is in the world. That is my great ambition."

She tried to speak, tried to meet his look, sought to form in her mind some word for him. If he had only come to her and taken her in his arms she would have known an answer.

After a little while of patient waiting he rose, slowly, and went out into the rain. The moment was over and he was gone. Perhaps it would never come again.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HUSK OF CONVENTION

To Eleanor Channing a wonderful thing had happened. At the moment when the shaft sped from her hand to take the life of a wild beast that was threatening her mate, the thin husk of convention had been rent asunder and had fallen from her like an old and outworn garment. From its chrysalis she had stepped, like Parwati from the snowy mountain, a new being, warm-blooded, quickened in every pulse, brimming with young life and love. She had not realized then, she did not realize now, that from that moment, when she stood fighting for the life of this man, she was his, body and soul, pledged to him eternally in the high bonds of love and service, plighted there under the waving trees and the sunlit sky, with a troth never to be broken while she lived.

Of her formal engagement to marry she had not even thought, but it occurred to her now, as she sat looking with bright, wet eyes after the man she loved. He had said " after we have left this place," but he did not know. Had it been fair to leave him

in ignorance of this promise? Would he have ventured his words to her, as he had to-day, if he had known? Should she tell him now, as her answer, and let this misty far-flown obligation stand between them with its meaningless barrier? She could think of no man of her acquaintance who would let it stand. Would he?

Her soul was whipped by the flagellations of her mind, as the thought came that it might be months, perhaps even years, before relief appeared, and the prospect of waiting endlessly for the love that was by right hers, was unbearable in her sudden realization of this elemental passion. Why had he not caught her in his arms and taken her, whether she would or no? She was almost angry at his patience as she heard him chopping on the beach below. How should she greet him again, with the knowledge of both their loves upon her heart?

But the mood passed, and as the rain ceased she was able, with almost her old cheery smile, to go to him when he called her to see a school of baby bonitos disporting themselves off shore.

Starbuck, after his confession, had watched the downward glance of the woman he loved, waiting for some outward sign of what his words had meant, but unschooled in true love's attitudes, he had seen nothing. Her silence told him that she was not ready to answer, and that he must go on

as he had planned to do, patiently, with her honour lying between them until he should have the right to woo and win her, if he could, before all the world.

With a new found earnestness of desire to find a means of leaving the island, Starbuck now turned the most of his attention to the building of a boat. With the iron of the dinghy in ample supply, he was able to turn out a far better collection of tools than he had before possessed, and with these, and his sailor's knowledge, plus a certain native ingenuity, he laboured for days at a time, the fabric growing slowly under his hands, as each part was fashioned with painstaking care. The laying of the keel, the moulding of the frame, the planking and bracing of the new boat was watched with jealous eyes by Eleanor, who now added to her terror of the sea, the fear which grew into an obsession, that if they left the island by this means one of two things would surely happen. Either they would be lost in the sea, or, being spared, would lose each other in the ocean of the world of men.

He noticed her aversion to the now nearly completed craft, and wondered at it, never fathoming the real reason, but laying it always to her horror of the sea, caught, no doubt, as she had said, during her days in the open boat, following the wreck. These fears, indeed, she openly expressed, and though he laughed at them, it was always with a

feeling of uneasiness lest at the last she should utterly refuse to embark. He now redoubled his watchfulness, often climbing to the volcano's summit to scan the horizon for the glimmer of a sail. Once, he thought he saw the topsails of a ship, but the vision went out before his eyes like the fading of a dream, and he kept it to himself.

The days and weeks passed swiftly, and it was time again for the changing of the monsoon to the northeast. Unsettled weather prevailed, with fierce gales that swept the island with their blasts, uprooting trees and piling them like jackstraws, up and down the beach. Starbuck saw that he would have to build a more substantial habitation to withstand the wind, and set about it at once. With stones as large as he could carry, he built a low platform, and on this anchored the house that was to be hers. It was a larger structure, better built in every way than the first, and once installed, she felt happier than she had for weeks. Its air of permanency seemed to put off, at least for a time, the spectre of the sea, and thus lifted a heavy weight from her mind. Starbuck built himself a smaller lodge, nearer the other than the first had been, and there took up his quarters with some satisfaction. The boat was now finished and he only awaited fine weather for her trial. He spoke with enthusiasm of her lines and her trimness, but sympathy

was lacking in Eleanor's response, and he dropped the subject, more or less puzzled.

The first day that the northeast monsoon seemed really to have settled itself, Starbuck appointed as the day for his trial voyage, which was to be around the island, but as he was making his preparations Eleanor came to him and begged him to climb after a particularly fine bunch of green cocoanuts on a palm that grew at a little distance on the edge of the beach.

He easily consented and she brought him his climbing gear, which consisted of a strip of sennit a foot long and about two inches in width, looped at each end to admit his feet. With his arms about the trunk, and the strap pressed against the rough bark, he could make his way rapidly to the top, "exactly like a monkey on a stick," so the girl criticized the performance.

Starbuck examined the strap she brought him and saw that it was worn in one place, but considering it good for at least one more climb, he adjusted it and began the ascent. The palm, perhaps seventy feet tall, was easily negotiated, for like most of the trees along the beach, it leaned from the force of the wind, so that the climber was aided greatly by the slant. Starbuck threw down the green husks, one after another, and began to descend.

He half slid down the trunk, until, when about

twenty feet above the ground, to her horror, the girl saw the strap break, and the man lose his careless hold. Straight down, he fell, his hands clutching wildly at the tree. He struck almost at its foot and his head came in sharp contact with a stone. He lay very still.

Rushing to him, Eleanor lifted his head, to find an ugly wound in the scalp over the ear from which the blood was oozing. Frightened, she spoke to him, and when he did not move she called louder, her lips close to his face.

"Speak to me," she cried, "John, oh, my heart's dearest, can't you speak? Can't you hear?"

Her loosened hair fell across his face as she leaned over and took his head in her hands, calling him by name. He did not move or answer, and frightened, almost despairing, she clung to him, her breath coming in quickening sobs. She bent lower and kissed him again and again, on the lips, as she strove to bring him back to her. Finally, rushing to the beach she brought water in a fold of her skirt and dashed it in his face, and then, bending down, lifted his head again in her arms. Slowly his eyes opened, unseeing at first until his brain cleared from its mist, and then he spoke faintly.

"What is it?" he asked. "I fell. Are you hurt? Did I strike you?"

"No, no, dear, I'm here, safe, but you are hurt

and bleeding. You struck your head on a stone and it's badly cut. We must get back and stop the blood. Do you think you can get up?" she asked, as he made no attempt to regain his feet.

"We'll see," he answered, and raised his head.

As he attempted to lift his legs, the left one dragged, and a twisted foot fell over limply.

"It's broken," he said, simply, pointing at it.

For the first time Eleanor noticed that something was wrong. She quickly examined the leg, frightened at its appearance and well-nigh helpless in this new emergency. Starbuck, though beginning to suffer acutely, was quite calm, and regarded the fracture apparently more in the light of an inconvenience than a personal injury.

He reached down and stripped up the leg of his ragged trousers, examining the flesh. It was unbroken, thereby immensely lessening the danger, for had the fracture been compound he would indeed have been in hard case.

"It's all right, don't you worry, but you must help me a little. Never mind my head," he said, as she would have wiped away the trickling blood, "that can wait. It's this leg that needs fixing up. Let's see. Both bones, probably."

He could feel the ends of the larger bone where they had slid by under the skin, and made himself reasonably sure that there were no splinters to take

care of. Much relieved, he leaned back on the sand, and lying at full length, reached behind his head for the projecting root of a tree.

"Now," he directed, "take hold of the foot by the heel and toe and pull it straight. You'll have to pull hard, as hard as you can. Don't be afraid of hurting me. That can't be helped."

The girl, supposing no such force was necessary, was drawing gently on the foot, but now, at his command, she braced herself and pulled with all her weight. She could hear the grating of the ends of the bone as they were painfully dragged back into position, and she suffered nearly as much as he at the agony she knew she must be causing him.

"Be sure," he cautioned, "to hold the foot up straight. You can tell it's right when it points directly up and lies in a straight line with my knee and my hip. Got it?" he inquired, as she at last slackened the pressure.

"I — I think so," she said, out of breath with effort and emotion.

"All right, now lay the leg down carefully and brace the foot up so it won't flop again, and we'll see what there is for splints."

He sat up with an effort to hold the fracture in place with his hands while Eleanor left him.

"How would this do?" she asked, picking up the long slender frond of a palm leaf.

"Just the thing," he answered. "You couldn't have found anything better in a week. Take my knife and trim it down, and then find another just like it. That's it. But we must have something soft for a cushion."

"Would some tappa cloth do?" anxiously inquired the girl.

"Fine," he grinned, though the pain was bad. "We'll have this done in no time. You might get some sennit to tie it around with."

She dashed off up the beach to the camp, which lay only a hundred yards away, and was back in a flash with the needed cloth. Wrapping it in many folds about the leg, under his direction she laid on each side, the strong, stiff ribs of the leaves and began to wrap the whole, not with the coarse fibre, but with strips of white cotton cloth.

"Another sheet?" he asked.

She nodded and kept on with her bandaging, finally tying the ends around as neat-looking a piece of nurse's work as a professional could have turned out.

"That's fine. You're a wonderful girl," said Starbuck as he again got his back against the tree trunk. "Now," he continued, "you must find me something for a crutch and I'll hobble back to my little home."

Finding nothing that suited her purpose, she took

the axe and went deeper into the undergrowth, where he presently heard her chopping.

"Don't do that!" he cried out sharply. "Don't use that axe! You'll cut yourself."

But she did not heed and was soon back with two crotched sticks of hibiscus wood, which she proceeded to measure under his armpits, cutting them off with awkward strokes that brought forth a new protest from the helpless man.

"I'd rather *roll* back," he exclaimed, as she finished without mishap, "than have you cut yourself with that."

"I'm not so sure that you ought to be moved," she said with a professional cant of her head and a reflective look at the white bandage. "People with broken legs should lie very still, I've heard, or something horrible happens and they limp for the rest of their lives."

"Hoh," he scorned, "that's well enough for civilized folks, but nothing like that ever happens to savages like us. Why, I've seen some surgery in these islands that would make a civilized doctor stare. Once, when one of those Marquesas Kanakas broke a leg in two places, I saw their head wizard chop off the ends of the bone and whittle a hollow stick of wood to fit, and tie it in. And that fellow was walking about as good as new inside of six weeks. It's a fact," he asserted, as she waved

an incredulous hand, "and, more than that, down there, when one of them gets a broken skull from a club on the head, they trephine him with a piece of polished cocoanut shell."

He looked so solemn as he said it that she burst out laughing, and he took advantage of the diversion to seize his crutches and essay to rise. It was a painful effort, but with the girl's help he managed to get on his good foot and hobble slowly the short distance that seemed to him endless. She insisted that he should take up his quarters in her own hut, and, sick with the pain, he consented without argument. She deftly arranged the grass mats for his comfort, and with the injured limb on a pillow covered with tappa cloth and filled with the soft cocoanut fibre, he closed his eyes and dropped into a doze. With more of the torn sheet she made a bandage for the cut head, though she had no dressing except water, which she sterilized by boiling. When he awoke a little later he found her by his side, gently fanning him. She looked down and smiled.

"Do you want anything?" she asked.

For answer he reached out and took her hand.

"You're pretty good to me," he said.

CHAPTER XV

THE GIVING AND THE TAKING

As the day drew to a close, Starbuck became restless and feverish. The pain of his leg became greater and the wound in his head troubled him. Eleanor never left his side except to bring him cool water from the trough outside the door, or to attend to her cookery. When the darkness came, she lighted a little shell lamp he had made for her, which burned with a clearer flame than the old candlenuts, and sat beside him, mothering him and bathing his hot head with cool wet cloths. He slept fitfully, waking sometimes with a start, and calling her name. She dared not doze lest in his restlessness he disturb the setting of his leg, and the night passed slowly.

As the small hours grew, he fell into a deeper sleep, and she was able to catch a few moments' rest, holding his hand, that any motion might awaken her.

In the morning his fever seemed decreased and he was able to take a little of the poi that she had made. Making him promise to be still, she went

out to gather fresh taros and to bathe in the stream. The clean morning air with its hint of crispness, for it was November, gave her a sort of fierce joy at being alive, and as she came from the water she raised her hands above her head and stretched them out with a movement that embraced all the world, for though she knew that the man she loved was suffering, she could not conceal from herself the consciousness that now he was hers, to be cherished back to health and strength by her own tender care, and made at last to know that she had given herself to him.

As she stood in the bright shaft of sunshine that played through the gently waving treetops, looking out through the screen of greenery, upon the gleaming, shimmering sea, and felt the balm of the light airs play over the surface of her body, the new-born love stirred in her soul. A feeling of exultation seized her that started the blood from her heart, sending out its quick glow in pulsing waves, that turned roseate her cheeks, her neck, her breast, with its vital, thrilling flow. With a gesture, she threw to the winds the restraint of generations, flinging off the icy garments of her caste like a torn robe, whose folds no longer covered but only clung in hampering shreds, and stood forth a natural woman, free of all doubt, quickened by the knowledge of the passion of womanhood, her whole nature respond-

ing in glorious attune with the full, vibrant chord that love had struck.

It was a renaissance, complete and perfect, conceived in the immaculateness of a maiden's heart, brought to fruition in the simple labour of unselfish toil and service, welcomed, accepted and assumed, proudly, in the broad light of day.

Straight, fearless, beautiful she stood, shrouded only in the gleaming lengths of her hair that flowed down half her body's length in a sun-shot skein of gold. The sweet, long line of her throat and neck, half hidden in shining waves, the firm, snowy globes of her breasts, the cool, rounded grace of her arms, and the strong sun-browned limbs, delicate, lithe, swelling into full curves of beauty, might have been those of an Aphrodite emerging from her rose lined shell. As she glanced down she noted for the first time her body's wondrous transformation from the angular slimness of her former self. The long sweeping curves and the generous amplitude of rounded outline gave her a pleasure in their beholding that she had never sought before, and the sense of health and vital strength, both of body and mind, that came flooding over her, caused her pulses to bound anew with the hot, leaping springs of life within her.

What mattered it that she was here, cut off from the ties of family and friends; what mattered it that

she was alone in the midst of the sea, without the pale of all social law, living, frankly at hazard, in the growing intimacy of this primordial companionship; what mattered it if they never went from this place, but were left to themselves to live and love and at the last die, to be buried and mourned by the children of their union? Escape was forgotten, and as she looked back over the recent weeks, she realized it had been a thing but dimly considered in her heart of hearts. What mattered anything in the world so long as she possessed her love in peace and happiness?

The exaltation of her mood slowly passed, and in its place burned a low full flame, that overspread her entire being with its genial warmth and light.

She dressed quickly and returned to the lodge, to find Starbuck sitting up, his head sunk between his shoulders, his face pinched and drawn with suffering.

"What is it?" she cried in alarm, running to him and pressing him back on his pillow.

"I don't know," he answered thickly, moving his head from side to side, "I never felt like this before."

"It's the fever of your wound and your broken bone," she said, gently passing a light, cool hand over his forehead. "You must try to be quiet.

You know you promised, and I can't leave you if you break your word."

"I don't want you to leave me," he muttered, "ever."

"But I must sometimes," she said, as she straightened his pillow. "There is the fire to attend to and many things to be done."

"And I have to lie here like a great hulking baby and watch you work. I don't believe you even slept last night, though you do look so fresh this morning."

"Oh, yes," she replied, as she brought a bowl of water to bathe his face and redress his wounded head. "I slept," and to put an end to his talk, she gave him a bowl of poi to sip.

The drink was cooling and grateful to his parched throat and hot lips, and for a while he lay back and watched her, as she took from a pile a piece of snow white tappa and began to shape and stitch a garment.

"What is that you are making?" he asked, as he noticed her glance up from time to time as if measuring him with her eye.

"Something to make you more comfortable, I hope," she said, as she held up the cloth, which was rapidly taking shape. "You mustn't lie there tossing in your clothes. They're so hot and bunchy. You will feel better in this."

And as she worked, she talked to him quietly, as a mother might to a child, turning his hot pillow and moistening his hair, brushing it away from his face.

Though he protested at the cutting of one trouser leg that would not slip over the splints, he admitted the new comfort the cool fabric brought him, and he wondered at her as she was accomplishing his donning of her handiwork. It was an experience that he had not had since childhood; the soft touch of a modest woman's gentle hand, doing for him its utmost service. He blessed her in his heart for her mere presence at his side, and he thought grave thoughts that always led to the day when, God willing, he might speak to her the words that lay next his heart.

Where, he wondered, was the prudish, fearsome, artificial girl who had shrunk from him as they fought the great waves of the Pacific? Where was she whom he had seen on board the *Marquesas,* aloof even from her fellow travellers, the over-plus of refinement, with dainty chin lifted to ignore or to disdain the fellowship of all but the elect of human kind? But these thoughts were too soon pushed aside in the cloudy murk of suffering which he could not understand. He had been hurt before and had not fallen into the seeming helplessness that now overpowered him, and he wondered vaguely if

her sympathetic presence might be a reason for his weakness.

As the day passed, Eleanor noticed his increasing discomfort, which she attributed to the rising fever that came towards evening. He called constantly for water, and muttered, now and then, a strange desire to go down to the sea. With a cool cloth she bathed his body at intervals, and noticed the relief that came to him. At times he was delirious and babbled snatches from the memories of former days that shocked her deeply, but she understood, and felt only pity for the man who had come to her from the stormy loneliness of a sailor's wild life, and whom, despite it all, she had found worthy in her heart.

His delirium grew, and sometimes he would try to spring up, shouting, till all her strength seemed powerless against him. But she managed, nearly always, by close watching, to prevent the coming outbreaks, and at such times, with her face close to his, caressing him with her hands and with her voice, she bore him back again. Sometimes, after a period of wildness, he had an interval of calm, when reason returned briefly, and once he found her with her head against his breast and her arms about him, sobbing softly and praying God to keep him safe.

For two days and nights he lay tossing in his fever and on the third morning he awoke, clear-brained and cool, to find her lying beside him, sleep-

ing the sleep of pure exhaustion. For hours, it seemed, he lay there, not daring to stir for fear she would wake, thinking of his love for her and of her brave sweetness and the courage that had helped her fight the battle which was at last won. He knew that he had been ill, but how ill, or how long he had lain there, he could not tell. His weakness surprised and discomfited him greatly, and that he had been unconscious, raving perhaps, added to his uneasiness of mind.

All that she had done in his service he could not know, but he at least understood that it must have been that for which he could never thank her. As he looked at her now, lying, with her rounded arm beneath her cheek, her breath coming sweetly from between her parted lips, her wondrous hair outspread, and her soft bosom gently rising and falling, a great wave of love overwhelmed his whole being, and his eyes filled in spite of him, as he took a long, bright silken tress between his hands and laid it against his lips.

The action, gentle as it was, seemed to disturb her, and she awoke, sitting up with a start and looking at him. He smiled at her, and as she hastily laid her hand on his forehead she found it moist and cool. A great joy broke over her as she realized that the fever was gone and that he would be well again.

"Oh, my dear, my dear," she cried, bending over him and laying her lips to his brow, "thank God you have come back to me again!"

In her joy and relief, the last vestige of repression was thrown aside, and the great springs of warm, feminine, human love were undammed, flowing in their course, natural, unhampered, divine. There was no pretence left in her. She crooned above the man, whispering to him the affection of her heart that was wellnigh to bursting with its long pent flood. And he, strangely unsurprised, returned to her in kind the outpourings of a love that burst asunder the forgotten shackles of resolution, and set aflame the smouldering fire in his soul.

They were two primal beings, delivered from the bonds of the world's conventions, freed in the garden of their dreams, trusting utterly in each other, giving and receiving, their souls diffusing and intermingling until they became as one, bound about and sealed in a perfect integument of love.

With her head upon his arm she lay long and happily, caring only that he was hers, thinking of nothing save of the joy of possession, and the strange, wild sense of life that had opened to her like the petals of a great flower until she could look into its heart and see there the very essence of eternity.

But, after a time, the earth returned with its call of duty, and she remembered that her mate was still

the helpless child of infirmity. Though he persisted that, with the aid of his crutches, he was able to be about, she was inflexible in her determination that he remain as he was, for she did not intend to so soon lose the joy that her service brought to her. The flowers, the trees and even the sea took on new and joyous colours as she came and went, busy over her household labours. Everything she did seemed to take to itself a new meaning and significance, and her heart, singing its song of rapture, went out to all the world, embracing it all within a boundless sympathy.

After a few days of enforced quiet, however, Starbuck's impatience became apparent. His fever did not return and he quickly gathered his strength. She laughed, at first, at his restlessness, glorying at the same time in his meek obedience to her commands, but soon she found that he was concealing, with a lover's patience, a very real irksomeness at his captivity, and at last she permitted him to be clothed, not in his ragged garments, but in a costume of her own designing and manufacture, the counterpart of which she had fashioned for herself.

It consisted simply of a tunic of tappa, bleached to a dazzling whiteness in the sun, extending from shoulder to knee and bound about the middle with a girdle. To this was added a close undergarment of the simplest character, which it concealed. Her

own tunic fell a little lower than his, and was capable of being lengthened or shortened as occasion demanded, by pulling its folds through the girdle, which crossed between the breasts and cinctured the waist. The effect was most becoming, and as she first appeared he was astounded at the picture of simple beauty that she made. Her hair was caught in a great knot low on her neck and bound with fillets of white, and the rosy flesh of her arms glowed in sculptured perfection. Nor was she less pleased than he, for she knew her costume's becomingness, though her only mirror was a still pool of the stream, which, in its brown reflection, told her that she had done well.

Untrammelled, lithe-limbed, with the last confining artifices of civilization cast aside, physically as well as mentally, she moved before his eyes like a free spirit of youth and gladness. His joy during his period of inactivity was to watch her constantly, in admiration and wonder at the fate that had cast into his life a thing so sublime and so unmarred as his love for this woman. Time after time he sought to realize it, failing, except as now and then there was given to him an all too fleeting glimpse into the future, gone before he could grasp its meaning. There was no room in his being for anything except the riot of the joy of living.

CHAPTER XVI

TREASURE

THE long, bright days came and went, flying all too swiftly for both of the lovers, who, preoccupied with each other and the wonder of their existence, might have let ship after ship cross their line of vision without seeing, almost without caring. Starbuck was able to get about, clumsily, but well enough to relieve Eleanor of many of her necessary labours. Somewhat frequent examination of the leg showed that the bones were knitting well, and in six weeks he was able to bear his weight upon it. The atrophied muscles soon swelled to their former strength, the limb gained lost flexibility, and, at last, nothing remained to mark the injury. The wounded head was long since well.

With the return of his ability to work, Starbuck now began to turn his time to some account. The new boat, which had been launched as soon as he was fit to get about, proved an able craft under sail, and the pair had passed many long hours on the quiet waters inside the reef. On their almost daily

voyages Starbuck had studied closely the bottom, which was nearly everywhere visible through the clear water. Without mentioning his hopes he had marked several dark patches, which he believed were pearl oyster beds, and as he grew in strength, he planned how these might be made to yield up their hidden treasures.

At last he spoke to her of his idea, and assuring her that he was himself again, proposed diving for the shells. Her protest at this was vigorous and decisive. Not for all the pearls of the Pacific would she allow him to venture again into the depths, where she had once beheld the monster that had so nearly robbed her of him; and so Starbuck was forced to take some other way.

Of the iron from the dinghy, which had so well served their needs both on land and sea, he made a kind of dredge, which, though far less effective than one professional native diver would have been, served to bring the shells to the surface. It was heavy, cumbersome and hard to handle, but it was the only means at hand, and daily it was put to use. The best of the shell beds were on the southeasterly end of the island, where the reef was farthest distant from the shore, and where the deepening of the water was much more gradual. At first they found but little of value, but as they persevered, working every fine day, they met better success, and by the

time of the next change of the monsoon, found themselves in possession of more than a hundred pearls, of all sizes and degrees of perfection in form and colour.

Besides these there was a great pile of shell, which in itself was approximate payment for their labours. Eleanor, familiar with the prices of gems, set on them what seemed to him an enormous value, but as a conservative estimate, with an allowance for faulty ones, there was still left a goodly sum, which would serve them for some time, should fate will that they should ever reach a market.

But Starbuck was not satisfied, and while she, tired of the monotony of dredging, remained on shore, busy with her household cares, he kept at his toil, and finding still richer beds, added gem after gem to the collection. Once he found a pearl of extraordinary size, perfect in shape and colour, and this he carefully put away, saying nothing of it to her.

They had now been a year on the island, so she proclaimed one morning after a look at her calendar, which was the time-honoured expedient of the notched stick. Harmony reigned over them in their simple existence and their happiness. Nothing occurred to mar their peace, and though the red and yellow banner on the hilltop had long since succumbed to the weather, and the white streamer of

tappa cloth, which had replaced it, was too frail to withstand the breeze for any length of time, they were unworried and careless of rescue.

To Starbuck's eye Eleanor had undergone a marvellous metamorphosis, physically as well as mentally. From the purely conventional type of the almost provincial Boston society young woman, she had grown in mental calibre to the stature of an individual. Her crown of love had matured in her a personality, pure as the morning, loving, tender, with a depth of womanly character that broadened and blossomed in the great flower of her heart, sending out its perfume to him, mellowing, yet strengthening his whole nature in its gentle diffusion. And so, as if keeping pace with her innermost being, he saw that her body too had taken on a new perfection of its own. He marvelled at the clearness of her eyes, at the redness of her lips, at the strength and grace of her whole figure.

He noted that her breasts swelled fuller as they rose to meet the sweet column of her rounded throat, and that her shoulders and her arms were firm and brown under a skin like satin. Her hair, waving where it sprang strongly from her brow and neck, shone in an aureole of bright filaments, touched to gold by the sun, or swept from its fastenings by the breeze into a gossamer cloud that showered its fragrance wantonly abroad. Her

whole personality radiated a sense of health and loveliness that held him ever in a spell of wonder and delight.

Starbuck, too, was a far different man from the second officer of the *Marquesas,* who, a year before, had struggled panting to the beach from a shouting turmoil of wind and sea, his hand wrapped in the streaming hair of a half-drowned girl. Partly from necessity of expanding his resources in action, and partly from his association with Eleanor, who, both consciously and unconsciously, had been his dominating influence, he had developed a vigour and breadth of thought that raised his manhood high above its former plane.

His physique, well cast by nature, had lost entirely the slight tendency toward heaviness that had been gained in the easy life of a watch officer, and with daily physical toil had regained its youthful outline, which, combined with the strength of full manhood, made him a figure of true masculine beauty. His curling hair, of a tawny yellow, crisped by the sun, his muscles, rippling under the bronze of his skin, and the strong alertness of his body, clothed in its tunic of white, showed a picture such as might have brought the admiring glances of the thronging women of ancient Olympia. Thanks to the Frenchman's razor, he had been able to keep his cheeks and lips free of beard, and the clean

sweep of jaw and chin, the broad brow and keen blue eyes fittingly crowned a perfect ensemble.

As they were returning from a lucky day at their pearl fishing, not long after Starbuck's recovery, he noticed a certain air of listlessness in Eleanor that was quite unlike her. She had seemed less interested than usual in the business of the day, but it had been very warm and he laid her low spirits to this, dismissing the matter without thinking to seek another cause. The next day, when he was ready to start around the island to look for turtles, she suddenly decided to stay at home. She had clothing to make and mend, she said, and bade him go alone.

Wondering a little, he launched the boat and beat to the westward around the point. He was vaguely disturbed, and as he thought more about it he recalled various things she had said and done in the last week, that in the light of his new anxiety seemed now to have been in variance with her usual self, although they had passed almost unnoticed at the time. He pondered on the subject until an almost unreasoning fear of illness assailed him. There was no reason for any decline in health, and he told himself over and over that it was nothing. However he was so distraught that he almost missed a fine hawkbill that had crawled out to sun itself on the sand, and landing, barely captured the reptile by quick

manœuvring before it slid into the water. Without hunting for others he opened the shell, cleaned it, and laid it carefully in the boat, to be added to the already large collection they had put by.

When he reached home, Eleanor was nowhere to be seen, but she appeared at the entrance of the house as she heard his keel grate on the beach, and came down the sand to meet him.

"Look at this," he exclaimed, trying not to show that he saw anything wrong with her, though her hastily ordered hair told him that she must have been lying down.

He picked up the tortoise shell as he spoke, and showed its great size and depth. She spoke in quiet appreciation of his good luck but enthusiasm seemed to him to be lacking, and he threw the shell on the beach with a touch of impatience. Noting the gesture, she stooped and turned the shell over, exclaiming with more interest at its size, and he, glad to think his anxiety might be mere fancy, examined it with her. As he looked at her unawares, he noted for the first time a little sad wistfulness about the eyes, and the merest suspicion of an almost pathetic droop to the mouth, but not caring as yet to disturb her with questions, he laughingly touched the huge shell with his foot, and set it rocking.

"What do you think they use these things for all through these islands?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine. What?"

"Why, cradles for the babies. They make the best sort of cradles too; see how they rock — two ways instead of one, like the dingy old thing I suppose your family brought over in the *Mayflower*."

Hoping for at least a smile at his words, Starbuck was amazed when Eleanor, instead of answering, turned a little from him and was silent, her head bowed. He went to her and laid his brown arm about her shoulders, pressing his face close against her hair.

"What is it, little girl? Tell me. Aren't you well, or have I said something that wasn't kind to you? I know you aren't yourself. I've been noticing for a day or two. Can't you tell me?"

For all answer she turned, slowly, and buried her face in the hollow of his great, bare shoulder. And when he looked he saw that the tears were gently flowing.

"What is it, dear? What have I done?" he said, tenderly, raising her head until he could look into her eyes.

And there he half read his answer.

"Oh, John, my own dear husband!" she said.

Her arms went around his neck, and as he gathered her to him, close in a depth of wonderful tenderness, she knew that he understood.

CHAPTER XVII

SHANGHAIED

And now, with the days, Starbuck's anxiety grew, and he became filled with a wild desire to get away from the island. He was surprised at the calmness which Eleanor displayed, and her apparent lack of concern. She had recovered her usual spirits and activity, and tried in every way to shield him from the thought that whatever was to come bore with it aught of fear to her or of reproach for him. But though Starbuck, in order to seem convinced, went about his usual occupations with even more diligence than before, she often discovered him watching her keenly, and knew that he was thinking of the means whereby they might reach some sort of civilization. He made more frequent visits to the hill-top, and kept the streamer constantly flying from its staff. Each morning his gaze was toward the sea, and never did a day pass that he did not make a circuit of the island. He was cheerful, as she was, but she was aware of his constant thought, and it made her the more deeply tender toward him. Nothing in her life had equalled, in pure joy

and content, those weeks of love and trust, under a tender watchfulness that anticipated her smallest desire, and fulfilled to the utmost that sacred, unrecorded vow to love and to cherish.

Once he came upon her unexpectedly, to see her swiftly lay away something upon which she had been at work, but he did not let her know that he had seen, and went on his way, deeply disturbed. The idea of leaving the island in the boat, he knew, was ever a source of terror to her, and this he had of late almost abandoned. If he could only know their geographical position, and granted it was not too far out of the paths of trade, if there was great need, it might be possible for him to make some inhabited island alone, and return in a reasonable space of time. But this plan was unthinkable unless the coming months should pass without the coming of a ship, and thus render something of the sort imperative. To this end he attempted, even, to fashion a sextant, but with his rough tools, the instrument he finally finished was so inaccurate as to be of little use. He thought of the wireless telegraph, but he was as ignorant of its operation as of its construction, and even were the raw materials to be found, he lacked the necessary knowledge for their use. Try as he would, he could think of no practicable way out, and so, at last, sat down to a vigil of never ending watchfulness.

One night, after a day when anxiety had been written in every line of his face, unconcealed from her even in his constant effort at dissembling, she heard almost a sob escape him as he lay beside her. Quickly, with a sympathy that was almost motherly in its gentleness, she laid her arm across his breast and sought to comfort him, but he openly reproached himself, bitterly blaming the selfishness of his love, until, closing his lips, she bade him hush, and refused to hear him.

It was just a year from the day showed by a deep notch in her Crusoe calendar, that she recognized with a shudder as marking the death of Aubert. They had risen early and he was preparing to go to the summit with a new tappa cloth pennant. As he laced the thongs of his moccasins, he said:

"I feel as if something might happen to-day. I wonder why that is."

A little shocked, she turned the remark off with a light reply, but all the morning she found herself going back to that scene of violence on the beach. She saw again the form of the man she loved, and that other form, the two at grapples in a struggle as of wild beasts, swaying to and fro, gasping out oaths between set teeth, locked in an embrace of death, as one, finally, with a great effort gained the mastery, and the other rolled from off his knee, limp and motionless. She saw again the heaving

chest of the victor as he looked on what he had done; the great arms, that hung loosely at his sides, and the swelling muscles of his torso; the skin, marked with ugly red splotches, and the blood trickling in a little stream from his fingers, as it ran crimson from the wound in the shoulder, where the teeth of a human animal had met.

She covered her eyes in horror at the picture of it, and tried to set about her work as usual. But something haunted her. His words had left fear in the air and she felt a nameless dread of that which she could not grasp. She wished he would return.

All at once she was aware of a crashing in the undergrowth and almost immediately Starbuck burst upon her, his garments in tatters, but the light of great joy shining in his eyes.

"It's come!" he shouted. "Can't you see it? A schooner, off there to the westward. Come," he cried, catching her and dragging her down the beach. "We're saved. Oh, thank God, you will be safe!"

Out past the western head of the island where he pointed, at last she could see the white gleam of a sail, far away in the distance and headed to pass several miles to leeward of the island. Even her eyes shone as she shared his excitement.

"Quick," he commanded. "We must be quick.

They may not have seen our signal and we shall have to go out to them."

He dragged the boat to the water's edge, and hurriedly made it ready for launching, but when he turned, expecting her to leap aboard, he found her standing quite still, lost in thought.

"Come," he called, with haste in his tone. "Come, we shall be too late!"

"Wait!" she said; "are you going to take me out to that ship, knowing nothing of the people on board? There might be almost any sort of men; and it might be far worse than staying here."

She looked again at the schooner, now well in sight, and seemingly such a small, irresponsible kind of craft, that her native intuition increased her distrust. Turning her eyes from it back to him, she said again:

"Think! What if that vessel should be bound to some distant port! Suppose it should be crowded with islanders or the beachcombing riff-raff that infest these seas — such men as you have told me of! Would you feel satisfied for me to go among them? Why not go out alone and hail the ship and tell its captain your story. Then he will take our message for help to some port and they will send us relief. There is no hurry. We are comfortable here, and happy, and if no one should come for months it would make no difference. Then, besides,

think of the value we have here, stored away. Would you have all that fall into the hands of thieves? No, John, that would not do. Don't you see, dear?"

As she spoke he considered. The pearls they had collected at such pains suddenly leaped into their real value. From being merely baubles that had amused her and him while they were being gathered and husbanded, he now saw them as practically his only resource in the world of civilization, and his only means of taking proper care of her. All at once this treasure grew to an importance that overshadowed all else save one thing. The new view sobered him, and he saw that he had been thoughtless.

"Eleanor, you have more sense than I," he said; "you are right, dear. But we cannot let this chance go by. I must get out there and see what they are. If the schooner isn't decent for you, I will tell them to send help and come ashore. While I am gone, pack the pearls in a bundle of cloth and be ready."

He kissed her hurriedly, before she had time to speak further, and, shoving off his boat, headed straight out through the break in the reef, before the wind, pointing well to the east to intercept the schooner. He did not like the way she seemed to be hurrying by the island, for, he thought, her people must have seen his signal flag at that distance, and

the sense of excitement coming to him again, he worked his craft to get every inch possible from her. Once or twice he turned, and looked long at the little figure in white upon the beach, and waved his hand to it, while she, as long as he could see, waved in answer with a flowering branch of jasmine.

Settling down to the chase, Starbuck held his boat steady over the mounting seas, for the wind was fresh and he still had a mile or more to go. The schooner was holding stiffly to her course, but he did not fear that she would outfoot him and pass the spot where he had planned to meet her. It seemed strange that the watch on deck did not sight him, but he had little time to reflect on this for the seas were now taking his entire attention. At last he was near enough to make out men on the vessel's deck, and suddenly he saw her come heading up into the wind and drop a jib as her sails shook, slatting, in the stiff breeze. In five minutes he hailed her and received an invitation to come aboard. Rounding to in the lee of her stern, he took a line that was passed him and made his skiff fast as he climbed over the taffrail.

At the wheel was a tall, lean man of about fifty, with moustache and chin beard, discoloured at one side by the reek of a clay pipe, that seemed riveted between his teeth. His breath smelled strongly of

bad gin, and he spat over the rail as Starbuck came aboard. Starbuck eyed him narrowly and with disfavour. Looking down the schooner's deck he saw its untidy length, littered with bits of pearl shell, as if a cargo had just been taken aboard and the vessel had not yet been cleaned. On the starboard side, amidships, a huge negro leaned, with his arms on the rail, and as he turned his head to look aft, Starbuck saw the red gash of a recent cut across his cheek, severing the top of one ear. Forward were two other men, evidently Kanakas, but they were half hidden by the foremast and he could not see them plainly.

"Well, Mister, what kin we do for ye?" was the question of the man at the wheel, as he looked at Starbuck and his queer raiment, the upper half torn to strips by his rush from the volcano's summit.

"Where are you bound?" asked Starbuck in return.

"Bound? Bound for Hell, I reckon, if we don't get way on her out of here," he replied, with a glance to the westward through the glass he carried.

"Are you the skipper?" queried Starbuck again, not liking the man's reply.

"Naw, I'm the mate. The old man's below. Want to see him?"

"Yes," said Starbuck.

"Flat!" bellowed the man.

The great negro slowly divorced himself from the rail and came aft, slouching along the deck, his great hands swinging in front of him like those of a gorilla.

"Here's a gent wants to see the skipper. Take him down."

The negro evinced no curiosity whatever, but silently led the way through the companion and down a short ladder. Without knocking he pushed open a cabin door and motioned for Starbuck to enter. As he stepped in, a crushing blow struck him from behind and he staggered forward. Almost stunned, he fell against the edge of a bunk, and turning, had barely time to dodge another smashing impact from the negro's fist, which, missing him by a hair, brought up against the side board of the berth, splitting it with a crash. Starbuck gathered himself and sprang straight at the black throat, clutching the oily skin in his left fist and sending a smashing right against the man's slack-hanging jaw. With the blow, the negro reeled against the door, but recovering almost instantly, he shook himself, and catching Starbuck about the waist, lifted him high and sent him hurtling across the small cabin to the deck. The door opened and the man with the tobacco-beard stuck his head in.

"Havin' trouble gittin' acquainted?" he asked, with a grin.

But the negro did not reply. He stooped to meet Starbuck's bull-like rush, and with a great left fist caught him just below the breast bone. Starbuck dropped like a log.

"I see," nodded the other; "no trouble; no trouble at all. Just clap a stopper on him till he gets kind o' useter our gentle ways."

The black, with a sailor's deftness, surprising in such bulk, tied Starbuck hand and foot and tossed him into the lower berth to recover at his leisure, and locking the door after him made his way on deck, where the two Kanakas had already gotten up the jib. The schooner paid off quickly and, sweeping around on her heel, was off again to the eastward.

It might have been one minute or thirty, so far as Starbuck ever knew, that he lay there unconscious. His first feeling, as his senses slowly shaped themselves out of the blur of his brain, was one of pain at the cords that bound his wrists beneath his back, and he turned on one side to escape the pressure of his body on his cramped arms. His next, was a white-hot blast of rage that swept him into a tremble from head to foot. Bound and trussed like a fowl for the oven, he turned and writhed against his bonds, straining until the thin marline cut deep

into his flesh. But it was of no use, and for a while he lay still, listening to the gurgle of the water under the schooner's counter as she heeled to the breeze.

For what reason he had thus been shanghaied in the middle of the Pacific, he did not know, unless either he or his boat was needed by the skipper, whom he now knew must be the man at the wheel. As four made an ample crew to work the craft, he decided that his boat was the reason, and remembered that the schooner carried no skiff at her taffrail. But whatever the cause for his captivity, it was useless to attempt to escape now. For all he knew, he might, even at this time, be leagues away from the island, and to navigate his small boat through the dangers of a return voyage, without food or water, even supposing he could make away with it, was foolhardy to think of. He must accept his present mishap in good part, and at the first port or the first inhabited island that they sighted, make his dash, if he was forced to swim for it.

The cabin in which he lay reminded Starbuck of his old coasting days when little more than a boy. The little box of a place was just large enough to hold the two bunks, one above the other, and a transom locker, on which lay a heap of dirty clothing. His own garment, in rags before he started from the shore, had been torn to shreds in the strug-

gle with the giant black, and he lay practically naked except for a breech cloth. Surveying, as well as he could, the sides of the room, he found the bulkheads bare and greasy except for a vividly coloured lithograph of a lady in full tights which was nailed to the door. A few names, and what he guessed to be lines of obscene verse, were scribbled beneath it. A mirror that looked as if it might be of tin, was fastened over the locker, and this was all.

Light filtered in through the grimy skylight, which was so caked with smoke and dirt as to render it almost opaque. Through it he could see nothing, but hearing a step overhead, he listened in an effort to catch some word that might give him a clue to the vessel, her business, and the identity of his captors. He could hear the murmur of a low voice, but the words were indistinguishable.

Seeing nothing further to occupy his observation, he lay still, and his thoughts flashed back to Eleanor as he had seen her, standing alone on the beach, waving him a last good-bye. A last good-bye? He tore at his bonds again, wildly muttering in incoherent mouthings of rage and helplessness.

CHAPTER XVIII

ALONE

From the moment when Starbuck had pushed off in pursuit of the schooner, Eleanor, with grave misgivings, had stood watching until she saw him reach the vessel and climb aboard. Without a glass it was impossible to distinguish one figure from another, though her eyes, now accustomed to long distance vision, were far keener than they had ever been before. Standing where he left her, she waited to see the schooner head in toward the island, and when the jib went up and the vessel paid off, her heart gave a great bound of joy. But as she looked, the craft's head swung pointing outward on its former course. Still supposing this to be some manœuvre, made necessary by the direction of the wind, she looked to see the vessel soon come about. But slowly she realized that it was getting farther and farther away, and it dawned in her brain, at last, that it was leaving her. Scarcely able to credit her senses, she watched, with muscles and nerves drawn tense, eyes staring and thoughts awhirl. It was true! There could no longer be a doubt. The

schooner, headed to the eastward, was rapidly growing smaller in the distance. It was some trick, she thought. Perhaps the captain was in a hurry to complete a voyage to some nearby island, and would quickly return when his urgent mission was completed. But why, in that case, had Starbuck not come back to her in his own boat to wait for the vessel's return?

At last, when only the glimmer of the schooner's sails showed in the sun above the blue expanse, she uttered a wild cry and sank to her knees in the sand, rocking backward and forward in the grief of desertion, a fear born of despair and a numb sense of desolation. For a long time she sat, her face buried in her hands, sobbing bitterly. When she looked up again, the schooner was out of sight, and she was utterly alone.

Slowly, painfully, she rose to her feet and started toward the lodge. As she did so she noticed a white garment that she had washed, fluttering on a bush beside the door. It was one of his, one that she had made for him with her own hands. She mechanically felt of the cloth to see if it was dry, and at its touch the overwhelming sense of the loss of him, her lover, her husband, swept over her like a blinding flash, leaving her as in the blackness of night, stricken dumb with the direness of her calamity.

All that day she sat near her door, with her head leaning against the wall of her house, mute, tearless after the first wild outburst, smitten down by the intensity of her suffering. Of the harm that might befall her, she did not think. It was the thought that he was gone, gone after entering her life to fill it to overflowing with happiness and content; gone when she would have denied herself anything the world had to offer to keep him; gone when she should most need his companionship and his love.

That he might have chosen to leave her was a thought that neither then nor ever afterward gained even a glimmer of consciousness. That he had been carried away against his will, fighting fiercely until overpowered and beaten down, she knew, and her trust in him was never lessened by the lightest shadow of a doubt.

She wondered at times what would have happened had she accompanied him. Would the people of the vessel have taken her also, or did they, for some strange reason, need only the man? She had heard Starbuck tell tales of the shanghaing of seamen in many ports, and she decided that this must be such a case, where a captain, finding himself short-handed during a voyage, had gone to desperate lengths to man his ship. And in this explanation she found a gleam of hope. The smallness of the vessel, she now saw, probably precluded any ex-

tended voyage, and it seemed quite likely that it was one of the trading schooners she had heard so much of, cruising from island to island or from group to group through the archipelagoes of the Western Pacific, buying pearl shell, copra and the other native products. Whither the vessel might be bound, she had not the slightest notion, though Starbuck, in explaining their supposed position on the map, had told her that in all probability the next group to the eastward would be the Ralick chain of the Marshalls. In this direction the vessel had headed, and as she remembered that the distance was comparatively not great, she gained the courage to believe that should Starbuck be able to make his escape in the first port touched at or even sighted, he would return to her soon with a rescue for them both.

With this surmise she went no farther into an analysis of the situation, and as the thought grew through desire, it seemed to her almost a certainty that this scheme of events would come to pass.

Cheered immeasurably above her former abysmal despair, clinging fast to her belief, and building on it even the phantom dreams of highest hope, she gradually became calm again, and set about the daily tasks imposed by actual existence. The idea that Starbuck had been killed came now and then to her mind, but she resolutely put it away from her as

beyond belief. They had grown so close, so thoroughly alike in thought and the very essence of being, that she felt intuitively that if any physical harm came to her mate, she could not miss the impinging knowledge of it, even across the waste of sea. Though she would have scorned the imputation of occultism, she nevertheless felt certain that a personality so attuned to hers would send some message of its fate.

As the days dragged interminably by, Eleanor, for the first time, really had an opportunity to reflect on her position. With the glamour, if glamour it was, of Starbuck's vital presence gone, her thoughts drifted back to the life she had left, and to the people she had called her friends. She was surprised to find that it was difficult for her to pick up again the thread where she had dropped it, so sudden and so complete had been the change of environment. Her life on the island had been so entirely distinct from her existence in the world in which she had always moved, that it was with a sense of remoteness that she recalled the former routine and scheme of her existence. She felt that the last year was the only one of her life she had really lived; that her eyes had been opened to see, at last, a real world, and that the things she had once considered worth while were the merest shadows of reality. She remembered the quiet, sheltered days

with the good people who had reared her from childhood; their simple, well ordered lives, in which the slightest untoward circumstance was magnified into a small disaster, and with whom the smallest deviation from the tenets of enwrapping convention was looked upon with pained surprise.

And her promise to wed, made partly for the sake of her duty to her career, partly because of the comforts and position it would bring. Under other circumstances she might have felt a pang of conscience that this promise had been so lightly broken, but this was not the first time she had given it consideration. She did not love that amiable young man, Mr. Ellery Oldsworth. She had never loved him. They had been thrown together from their earliest youth, and in becoming engaged to each other they had done only what every one had expected of them. That such an engagement must necessarily have been terminated by the mere fact of her isolation here with another man, she could not doubt. In all probability her fiance had already finished his period of mourning and even now might be attached elsewhere, perhaps betrothed, for the news of the *Marquesas* disaster must have been flashed to the ends of the earth. She thought, too, of her father, and of that kind old foster-parent, who would be still grieving for her as for his own child, and her heart went out to him in pity for his

declining years, which must be spent without the lifelong helpmate she had called Mother.

That she was only a memory to a host of people, who now rarely spoke her name or recalled her at all with more than a passing phrase, she was certain. How, she wondered, would they receive her, if she should return to them to take up the old existence, the round of little gaieties, and social functions, the teas, the dinners, the dances, the opera; all the poor amusements of a vapid flock, bored to extinction with themselves and each other, turning ever to new extravagances in search of relief; not living, but shamming through an existence, as futile and absurd in its senseless round as they themselves.

With clear eyes she saw herself as she had been a year ago, with her prim ideals, her foolish, faddish cynicism, mocking at the things that were worth while, and her narrow, sordid outlook, hemmed in by the fear of adverse opinion, defending itself vainly with haughtiness and mannerism. How contemptible she must have been in the eyes of such a man as Starbuck, a man who knew life as it was, who had come up from the workaday world, through its grime and its dust of toil, and who had emerged, calm and unsoiled by its contact, a clean and honourable soul, who had been tried in the fire of a hundred circumstances, who had risen victor in a hundred battles.

She tried to compare him with Mr. Ellery Oldsworth, her *fiance de convenance,* and she almost laughed aloud as she fancied him in Starbuck's place. Would he, she wondered, have been able to save her as had this man, first from a sinking ship, then from the sea itself, and finally, would he have taken the life of a man with his bare hands in her defence? Given the physical ability for these things, would his cheap cynicism have dropped from him, and would he have become the living, vital force that could turn the greatest desolation into a veritable Eden of content and love? She smiled again, and cynically too, but it was the cynicism of truth and not that of mockery.

And finally she thought of the future, and what it held, in the never lessening faith that her mate would return to claim her. She saw nothing in it that was sinister, nothing that was unwelcome. She knew Starbuck's ambition to quit the sea and follow the higher branch of his profession as manager, and at last owner of great carriers of the world's wares. She knew his dream of a house flag that should be flown around the world, and she did not doubt that one day it would be realized. He had explained over and over again his theory, that on the completion of the great waterway across the isthmus, the capital that heretofore had found a natural outlet in the development of a nation's

highways, would turn to new fields of activity and at last rehabilitate the maritime importance of America.

His information was so wide, and so well acquired, that his knowledge had astonished her with its depth. Far from being the careless sailor that she at first thought him, he had displayed an insight into great economic conditions that had made her feel ashamed that she, with her supposed advantages, should be so completely at loss when called upon for her opinions. The man, she had found, was a student and a thinker, who, delving here and there at each hard won opportunity, had gathered his knowledge at the cost of effort and under the most adverse conditions. In her heart she knew him for a true man who loved her, and who would rather die than that she should suffer pain or grief. He would come for her, she knew, and with him she would be safe — for always.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ESCAPE

Of all the thoughts that raced their course through Starbuck's brain as he lay bound in the schooner's cabin, one stood out high above all the rest and never left him. Whatever should befall, he must not risk his life in war upon his captors, until he was able to communicate with some one to whom he could entrust the knowledge of Eleanor's plight. It would be far better to submit to these men than to struggle against them, and, in the end, perhaps die at their hands. The part he must play was that of willing recruit in their adventure, whatever it was, trusting to his own wits to find a way out.

As he lay thinking quietly, he planned, in general, a method of procedure. First, he desired, above all things, to know the position of the island he had left. He knew the direction in which the wind was blowing, and from the slight heel of the schooner to port, he was sure she was running free, following the original course to the eastward. If he were only on deck he could judge her speed, and from a glance

at the skipper's reckoning at noon that day, it would be a simple matter to place the island nearly enough in latitude and longitude. But it might be past noon, and in that case he would have to wait, noting carefully any change in the course, and make his calculations from the observation of the next day.

Busy with this idea, he was interrupted by a step in the passageway outside, and the next instant the door opened a few inches and the hooked nose and dirty beard of the skipper showed itself. Seeing Starbuck still bound and quiet, the man stepped in, surveying his prisoner with a dog-toothed grin, showing the dental mechanism which held the pipe to be a groove, deeply worn in the only two remaining teeth that met.

"So!" he said, wagging his head; "ye're comfable, I see; takin' yer ease, wonderin', I reckon, what I want with ye. Well, I don't blame ye none fer that. It ain't much though, and if ye'll turn to like a man, we'll have no trouble. Ye see," he went on, as Starbuck was about to speak, "it was oncommon lucky of us to find an able cuss sech as you sojerin' around on that there island. Oh, we seen yer signal right enough, and we seen the other feller on the beach, but we didn't need only one, and as you was so considerin' of our time as to come off and board us, we thought it more kind-like fer you not to have no sad partin' words but come along just

as ye were. If ye give no trouble ye'll be treated right and maybe be put sommat to the good before ye're done. Now, wha'd'ye say? That's fair-reasonin', ye'll admit. Ye get yere carcass salved off the beach and put where ye can get a ship and pay to boot. How's that?"

"Fair enough. I accept," said Starbuck, immensely relieved at the attitude the man was taking.

"Now, for God's sake, undo these lashings. The blood's all out of my hands and feet. That damned nigger did a good turn, I'll admit that."

Without more words, but with some caution, the skipper soon had Starbuck free. He sat up on the edge of the bunk, slowly rubbing the feeling back into his numbed extremities.

"The nigger won't bear ye no ill will for his broke jaw, if you won't," said the skipper with a grin. "You must ha' got a reel man's punch in that fist o' yourn. Busted his jawbone like the boom had hit him. But it's all right, he ain't got no hard feelin's, Flat ain't. An' now I'll put ye in my watch an' we'll go on deck. Ye can hand, reef an' steer, I reckon."

And turning, he showed the butt of a pistol at his hip as he climbed the short ladder to the quarter-deck, where the huge black stood at the wheel, his face tied in a dirty bandage. As Starbuck came through the companion, close on the skipper's heels,

the giant gazed at him, unconcerned, and even grinned with his thick lips, though he did not speak, and Starbuck now saw the reason for the name of "Flat." His nose, either from birth or through mishap, had been pushed almost level with his cheeks, leaving only the flare of the wide nostrils to show where it should have been. This deformity, combined with his unusual length of arms, and manner of swinging them before him when he moved, increased the remarkable resemblance to a gorilla that Starbuck had noticed when he came aboard.

As the cool breeze from the sea struck him, Starbuck involuntarily glanced down at himself, and the skipper, following his eye, gave a short laugh and said:

"Go, for Gawd sake, an' put on them pants and shirt on the locker below. It ain't decent for a white man to go around like you do. I'm that shocked I can't look at ye," and with another chuckle he waved Starbuck off the deck.

The things were greasy and ill smelling but they were wearable, and, putting them on, Starbuck returned to find the skipper taking the wheel from Flat. The negro at once slouched forward and disappeared below. It was evidently long after noon and Starbuck was disappointed at having to wait until the next day for his attempt to get the position of the island. The skipper called to one of the

Kanakas, who appeared from the galley with a dish of smoking salt beef, some biscuits, and a pannikin of something that passed for tea, and from these Starbuck made a meal, though his years of palatable diet caused him to choke over it more than once. Deeming it unwise to ask questions, he stood his watch on deck without comment. The skipper had not vouchsafed his own name, and that of the schooner having been painted out, both bow and stern, Starbuck made no effort to ascertain either, and cheerfully turning to, worked with one of the Kanakas washing down the decks, coiling the halyards, making the schooner probably more shipshape than that craft of varied fortune was able to recall. The skipper noted Starbuck's handiness with silent satisfaction.

He held her to her course throughout the watch, and when the negro was called to take his turn at the wheel again, Starbuck heard the instructions to keep her as she was.

"Ye kin take that cabin if ye want," said the skipper as he went below. "I won't make ye bunk forrad with the Kanakas."

At the next call of the watch Starbuck was given the wheel, and the course, east by south, a half south, and the breeze freshening as the night advanced, the schooner quickened her pace and boomed along with every cloth drawing, sending showers of spray over

her low bows as she dipped and rose. The skipper either walked back and forth on the weather side of the deck, smoking his everlasting pipe, or lolled over the companion and talked to Starbuck. But from all his conversation, which mostly took the form of anecdotes of his own voyages in younger days, Starbuck could draw no hint of the purpose or destination of the present cruise. From the smell, he knew that the schooner held a cargo of pearl shell, but whence it came and whither bound, he had no idea beyond the fact that in all probability it had been either filched from the preserves of some German trader in the Carolines, or had been pirated outright from a luckless native craft. That it had been gained in some illicit way, Starbuck was sure, from the silence regarding it, and from the newly cut gash in Flat's cheek, he guessed that it had not been won without a fight.

But the business of this craft did not concern him. For the present, his only aim was to reach a port where trading vessels stopped, or where a missionary was established; anywhere that he could tell his story and find some means of returning.

Things went quietly enough aboard the schooner. The skipper was evidently engrossed only in the business at hand and the negro remained peaceable. The other two did not count, apparently, one way or another. It was the next forenoon, when called

from his watch below, that Starbuck went on deck to find the skipper taking his noon observation with a battered sextant. Starbuck, with a glance overside, judged the schooner was footing, as she had been since he had come aboard, at the rate of perhaps eight knots, and as the man finished with his instrument and turned to go below, he caught the interest in Starbuck's face.

"Maybe you air good at figgers, which I ain't," he said. "Come below and look 'em over."

Overjoyed, Starbuck followed and soon was at work over a smooched and greasy British Admiralty chart that had been pricked by the records of more than one former voyage.

"I ain't no navigator," said the man, looking with some envy at Starbuck's neat figures as he worked out the schooner's position. "I ain't never had no chanct rightly to learn, but I most always come out summers near to where I'm headin'."

Starbuck worked out his variations with care and found that his guess as to the latitude and longitude had been approximately correct. He noted the position of the vessel at noon, and figuring an easterly run of twenty-eight hours, he placed the island, he was certain, closely enough at least to give a landfall.

Starbuck had noted the entire absence of curiosity on the skipper's part as to how he had been left

marooned, and had volunteered no information, but now his neatly done calculations evidently aroused some admiration in the man, for he said:

"Well, now, that's pretty smart for a beach-comber like you. Say, I ain't never been given none to askin' questions o' strangers, 'cause I don't want none asked o' me, but I kind o' taken a likin' to you and I'd like to know, if it's all the same, who ye be and how ye come on that there volcano island."

Starbuck hesitated, but, after all, he could see little harm in satisfying this mild inquisitiveness, and he told him of the wreck of the *Marquesas,* his name and position, omitting more than a passing mention of his companion, allowing the man to believe still that it was one of the crew. The skipper had not heard of the disaster, and in his interest concerning it he paid little attention to the history of its survivors.

That day, during Starbuck's afternoon watch on deck, they sighted, a point to the south of the schooner's course, the low landfall of an island, which they raised slowly out of the sea until it appeared as a thin circlet of emerald in a setting of lapis lazuli. It was a typical atoll of the Pacific, merely a ring of coral reef raised a few feet above the water, surrounding and forming a shallow lagoon, with a narrow opening to the northeast. The verdure extended almost entirely around the

circle, and consisted of waving cocoa-palms and the undergrowth about their bases. As the schooner neared the atoll, the beach was plainly made out, but no habitations were visible. Taking the wheel, the skipper intently scrutinized every foot of shore as he made an entire circuit of the island, throwing the schooner up into the wind off the entrance, which was not wide enough to permit the vessel to pass through into the lagoon. From the fore shrouds the great black man also was watching. Neither he nor the skipper spoke, but they seemed mutually satisfied with what they saw, for the anchor was let go and the jibs came down with a run.

It was late, but Starbuck noted preparations that meant going ashore. Since the sighting of land he had been almost ignored, and the skipper's plans were not communicated to him, but his boat was dropped over the taffrail, and with one of the Kanakas at the oars and the skipper in the stern, it made the passage of the reef and was rowed rapidly to the beach, where, landing, both men disappeared in the trees.

Starbuck, curious at this manœuvre, was tempted to question the negro, but the man remained in the shrouds, watching, and paid no attention whatever to his hail. Thinking it better, under the circumstances, Starbuck gave up further attempts, and lolling aft, waited for the boat's return. It was per-

haps an hour before it shot out from the shore, and by the time the skipper was again on board, the sun was sinking. With a careful eye to the weather, he decided to remain at anchor, and sails were lowered and put in stops without furling, ready to be set should the wind rise.

It was not until morning of the next day that Starbuck discovered the meaning of the business which had so puzzled him. At daybreak the hatches were taken off and the foul stench of half-decayed pearl shell rose up into the clean air of the sea. The black and one of the Kanakas were sent below, and with a tackle, the coir bags filled with shells were hoisted out and loaded into the boat. As each little cargo was successfully piloted through the reef to the beach, it was dragged up among the trees and dumped, the bags being returned for more. Starbuck's part in this work was that of a donkey engine, and with his shoulders harnessed to the whip tackle, he made endless trips back and forth across the deck in response to the cries of the men as they loaded the sacks below. In the afternoon he took the Kanaka's place in the boat, and was glad of the change, for the hoist was heavy work.

The entire proceeding was now clear. The cargo of shell plainly had been filched from some island far to the west, and it was now being cached on this uninhabited atoll until it could be taken off by some

trading captain, to whom it was later to be revealed. Starbuck now saw that the lack of a boat had been a serious matter, and as he had previously surmised, this was the principal reason for his own kidnapping. Without his skiff, the cargo could not have been landed. The skipper vouchsafed no information, however, beyond directions as to the hiding of the shell, and the work proceeded with intense activity. For three days and a part of the nights all hands worked steadily, transferring sack after sack from the hold to the beach and adding their contents to the growing heap behind the screen of vegetation. At last it was all out, the hold was cleaned, and sail made on the schooner.

And now anxiety again began to tear at Starbuck's heart. Thus far he had been content to let things shape their own course, because he was helpless to prevent, but since the prime object of the vessel's voyage had evidently been accomplished, he saw no reason for his further detention.

As the schooner headed out of the atoll's lee he followed the skipper below.

"Skipper, what's your next port of call?" he asked, with no preliminaries and in the confident tone of one who expects a free answer.

The man turned and surveyed him.

"It strikes me," he said, tilting his pipe at a new angle, "that ye know just about as much now as I

want yer to. No, my bucko, you'll have to wait till we git there, and maybe then some. Ever sence I let ye figger out my position I ben sorry, but you got knowledge now that I can't afford to have leak, and until this little job's finished you'll have to bide in the schooner, I reckon. Sorry, mate," he added, "but business ain't what it was, and I ain't takin' no chances. You won't be sorry, though, for I've put ye down for a lay that'll keep ye from working yer passage to 'Frisco. So jest you be easy an' comfable, an' in a month at most I'll give ye a proper discharge, *with* wages."

A flush of anger swept Starbuck from head to foot, and he felt a desire to reach out and take that skinny throat between his two hands, but he restrained himself as he thought of Eleanor and her distress. He turned away, seemingly satisfied, but it was a poor dissimulation.

He watched the course narrowly as opportunity was given, and found that it was changed from time to time as other atolls were sighted, with an evident desire to avoid them. For several days the general direction had been southeast, but, as he had not again had a chance to look at the skipper's chart, he was not familiar with the vessel's position. He still stood watch with the man as before, but he had been unable to draw the least information from him.

He thought again of approaching the black, whose general attitude seemed friendly, and one day, while the skipper was below, he walked forward to where the negro lounged by the rail. He had seen little of the man, and as he addressed a simple question, he remembered that he had never heard him speak, though he attributed his silence to his broken jaw. But now, to his surprise, the great, apelike creature removed his bandage, and opening his mouth, pointed to it, shaking his head. To his horror Starbuck saw that his tongue was entirely gone.

A chuckle from the direction of the quarter-deck made him turn, to find the skipper standing by the wheel, watching him.

"Information ain't plenty with that there nigger," he called. "You can remember easy all *he'll* tell ye," and he burst into a cackle that set his pipe wagging in his dirty beard.

"Pretty, ain't it?" he went on as Starbuck walked aft. "That boy is the most useful thing I got. Belonged to one o' them native princes in the Malay Islands, before he run away. I picked him up in Formosa. Had his talkin' machine cut out when they made him one o' them dumb eunuchs the sultans keep for servants, I reckon, though I ain't never got the information straight; but he was almighty tickled to come along o' me and make an honest livin'."

It now became evident that the fresh water on the schooner was running low, and that to replenish the supply she would have to make some port before many days. The skipper, however, displayed no anxiety, a sign which told Starbuck that he probably had his plans already laid for filling the butts. But this might also mean another uninhabited island, or one where only natives comprised the population, neither of which suited his purpose.

It was late in the afternoon of a day that had been notable for its heat and lack of breeze, when Starbuck, at the wheel, with the skipper below making love to a square-faced gin bottle, as he had often done of late, sighted to the eastward, a long, thin trail of smoke, low across the sky. It was a steamer, and though the ship was as yet hull down below the horizon, the sight of that hazy, gray streak set Starbuck's brain on fire with wild hope. If he could only come within hail before the skipper returned on deck; if he could only keep any one else from reporting the ship's presence!

The chance of getting his boat over the taffrail into the water was too dangerous, and at this distance the steamer would pass him unnoticed even should he succeed. His only chance lay in working near enough to hail and then swim for it. There was little wind, but this was fortunate, for the schooner, with a rap full, would have crossed the

steamer's course too soon. So Starbuck drifted, trying to think of some sure means of accomplishing his escape. The black was taking his watch below and it was still a full two hours before he would have to be called. The Kanaka cook was busy about the galley, from which the view to leeward was cut off by the foresail. The other native had turned in with the negro, thus leaving Starbuck alone on the deck. Below, in his cabin, Starbuck could see the skipper through the open skylight, sitting on his bunk, smoking, and now and then taking a sip from a china mug which held a decoction of gin and water. Now and then the man dozed in the heat, only to waken from time to time, and fill his mug again. With anxious eyes Starbuck watched him, noting with eagerness, as the bottle was emptied and a new one broached, until he marvelled at the immensity of the man's capacity.

The steamer's smoke was plainer now, and the tops of her masts and funnel had come into view. In half an hour the hull was visible, and to Starbuck's surprise he noted that it was gray instead of the black he had expected. Feverish with the strain, he watched it grow nearer and nearer, but the character of the ship puzzled him. His first thought, on seeing her colour, had been of a vessel of the United States navy, but as he made out her build he knew this was no warship. The minutes seemed each an

hour as she crawled toward him. Without a change of course she would pass astern, not more than a quarter of a mile away, and Starbuck saw that if he could wait, his best chance was to wave his shirt as a signal and then take to the water. Once the skipper started up as if to come on deck, and Starbuck's fists closed, and the veins in his neck swelled, as he resolved to silence him if it should mean blood on his hands. But as the man rose his foot struck a partly filled gin bottle, overturning it, and he dropped heavily back on the bunk to save the contents. Starbuck could hear him curse through the open skylight.

Saved for the time being, he knew that at any moment the skipper might appear, and the steamer was still beyond swimming distance. As she neared, Starbuck wondered more and more what she could be. That she was not a cargo boat, nor a warship, nor a yacht, he was sure, yet her lines suggested the latter more than anything else. But it mattered little if he could only reach her, and his great fear now became that she would pass too far astern to see him. He could let the schooner's head fall off but little without jibing, and this would have utterly exposed him by rousing the two men below, as well as the skipper. But the wind counted for little now, and the steamer was rapidly coming up. He could see two figures on the bridge and an awning over

her quarter-deck. She showed no flag and apparently was not intending to speak.

As he watched and waited, the cook, coming from the galley with a bucket of ashes, suddenly saw, and set up a shrill yell. The skipper, hearing it, stumbled to his feet and groped uncertainly to the ladder, muttering curses as he came. Starbuck met him at the companion, and with his boot caught him just under the chin. With a savage oath the man fell backward, but Starbuck had no time to pay him further attention. The giant black mute, roused by the cook's hail, was just springing from the forecastle with the Kanaka, and as the black muzzle of a revolver in the skipper's hand appeared above the deck, Starbuck turned and dove from the rail, sinking deep and swimming hard, under the surface.

Keeping down until his lungs cracked, he was forced to breathe at last, but as his head showed, two shots spat out and he sank again.

In the brief glance he had taken he saw that the schooner had been swung into the wind, and the skipper and the negro, each armed, were waiting for him.

When next he rose he was considerably farther away, but another bullet struck the water close by his head and he saw that the schooner's boat was already being lowered. Though he had reason to fear the skipper's marksmanship, he remained this time

on the surface, and looked toward the steamer, which was now but a short distance to leeward of him. He raised his voice in a shout as he saw men busy at the davits, and turning toward the schooner at another shot, to his joy he saw the small boat capsize as the drunken skipper fell into her. But a louder crack now smote his ear. The black had procured a rifle from the cabin, and standing erect, was shooting at him as fast as he could work the magazine.

He dove once more and swam just under the surface. As he raised his head again, he saw the steamer's boat in the water and gave a shout. The next instant, like a blow from a powerful fist, a bullet struck him in the shoulder and his left arm became powerless. He heard the chuck of another as it struck the water, and still another, but after that the shooting stopped, the rifle empty.

With his left arm trailing, his wounded shoulder leaving a streak of blood in the water, he swam toward the approaching ship's boat, and when at last he heard the sound of its oars and the encouraging shout of the men, he suddenly grew weak and sick. He manfully put out his last strength, gritting his teeth in his growing pain, and just as he felt a clutching hand grip his waistband, the waters roared in his ears and the world went out in a buzzing flash of fire.

CHAPTER XX

BY DEAD RECKONING

STARBUCK's first sensation upon awakening was the touch of cool linen, and he opened his eyes to look into a bearded, kindly face that was bending over the swinging cot in which he lay.

"Good," said a hearty voice, "we'll have you in shape in no time. Much pain?"

Starbuck nodded and glanced about the cool, bare stateroom inquiringly.

"Don't worry," said the bearded man. "You're in good hands and your late friends are nearly hull down by this time. This is the steamer *Darwin,* of the American Intercollegiate Biological Association, outward bound on a three years' cruise, Captain Bent commanding. I am Doctor Ames. Drink this and go to sleep. You can talk all you want to later, but we don't want any inflammation in that shoulder."

The doctor held a glass and raised his head while he sipped.

"Can I see the captain? I must see him," said

Starbuck, as he lay back. "It's of the greatest importance that I speak to him now, at once."

The doctor shook his head, doubtfully.

"You'd much better be quiet now," he said, "but, to relieve your mind, I'll answer your most pressing questions."

"Where are you bound?" asked Starbuck.

"Well, we're bound for New York, I suppose, eventually, but our next port will be Ponape in the Eastern Carolines," was the reply.

Great relief overspread Starbuck's face as he heard the words, for he knew that the island named was not more than two hundred miles from the dot of coral-ringed earth that held his heart.

"I can see that Ponape meant good news to you," said the doctor, beaming on him, "and you'd better rest for the present on that. I'll be back to look at you in a while."

He left him, and Starbuck, finding himself more weary than he thought, fell into a doze, comforted with the knowledge that he was being carried to a point, from which reaching his island should be a matter of little difficulty.

The surgeon came and went at intervals, but it was not until the next morning that he would allow Starbuck to converse at length. No signs of fever appeared. The bullet had glanced in the water, and striking the shoulder-blade at an angle, passed

through the deltoid muscle without shattering the bone. Though the wound was stiff and sore, it was clean, and was evidently due to heal by first intention. With this favourable prognosis the doctor consented to hear Starbuck's story, and he listened with huge interest as the wounded man related, without detail, the bare sequence of events which had brought him to his present circumstances. Eleanor he did not mention by name, but to his surprise the doctor guessed it. The boats from the *Marquesas* had been picked up two days after the sinking of the steamer by an east-bound government troop ship, and carried to Honolulu, where news of the disaster had been cabled round the world, with the names of the dead and missing; those of Starbuck, Aubert, Eleanor Channing and her aunt, Mrs. Hartley, being included among the latter.

During the day he received a call from Captain Bent and Professor Storrs, the chief of the expedition, to whom he repeated his tale, and after a consultation the latter came to him and told him that he had ordered the captain, after leaving Ponape, to make the run to the position indicated by Starbuck's rough calculations.

Starbuck's heart filled to overflowing with gratefulness as he heard the words that meant life to the woman he loved, and he seized the professor's hand in a grip that made that gentleman wince.

"Thank you, sir," he said, his voice husky with feeling. "Thank you. I hope that some day I shall be in a position to repay your goodness."

"Never mind that," returned the other, "humanity could do no less and it won't be far out of our way. We're bound to Manila first, for coal, and supplies that have been shipped from San Francisco, and we could leave you there unless something better turns up."

The next day Starbuck sat up and Professor Storrs brought his wife to see him. She had heard the story and even knew Eleanor slightly, through Mrs. Hartley, at whose tragic death she had been greatly shocked. Ponape was sighted on the fourth day and Starbuck was allowed to get on deck in a comfortable chair, while the other members of the expedition gathered to congratulate him on his escape and to hear the story at first hand.

"I know that old dirty scoundrel," said the chief engineer. "His name is Zeke Lumbert. He would steal the copper off a ship's bottom for a bottle of gin, and as for piracy on the high seas, it's his trade. There's been a German gunboat after him through the Carolines these two years, but so far he's been able to dodge. You are well out of that mess, Mr. Starbuck."

The *Darwin* had lain at Ponape, or Ascension Island, as it is known, for two days, and Professor

Storrs was still planning another visit to the great, mysterious ruins in the interior. Impatient at being forced to wait, Starbuck paced the deck or talked of Eleanor to the professor's wife, whose sympathy was the greatest boon to him in his anxiety. He had not hinted even to her of his love for the woman to whom his life was pledged, but with a woman's intuition she had guessed at least part of the truth. She saw his anxiety written in his face, and while she did not ask his confidence, she knew that whatever stamp the world might set upon the love of this man and woman, here, at last, was the true romance of which every woman has dreamed, and with a large understanding of humanity, she read between the lines the real story of the welding together of two souls beyond the power of man to break asunder. Her heart told her that here was a true man, not a youth of thoughtless passion or fleeting constancy, but a strong, purposeful character, open, free and fearless, of whom any woman might be proud.

As she listened to the fragments of the tale Starbuck told her, she pieced together the happenings that had brought the two closer and closer, until her eyes filled with tears as she thought of the girl, torn from her lover's arms in the tragedy of desolation. The picture of the little figure in white, standing on the beach, as the vessel holding him prisoner

turned its prow and bore him away, leaving her deserted and alone to encounter perils such as few women ever had known, was one that haunted her until she could bear it no longer, and driven to action by the spur of a great sympathy, she went to her husband and laid the matter before him.

"By the Great Day, Emma, why didn't you tell me this before?"

"I didn't know until to-day. I guessed, but I wasn't sure, and, now that I do know, I think we have no right to stay here digging in the musty ruins of a lost race, while a woman waits as she is waiting."

To her great joy her husband agreed with her, and starting for his cabin, told her to send Starbuck there.

At the end of half an hour he came forth, transfigured, and with face abeam with happiness, sought Mrs. Storrs on deck.

Mrs. Storrs blushed like a girl as Starbuck's thanks came spontaneously bursting from his lips.

"God bless you, ma'am, we can never thank you enough. You and your husband have bridged the gap between misery and happiness, perhaps life and death, for her and for me. And your husband — do you know what he has done? He has offered me the command of this ship at Manila, where he tells me that Captain Bent will be forced to leave on

account of his health. And I have accepted, if Eleanor consents."

The prospect of having a woman companion on the long cruise brought unmeasured delight to Mrs. Storrs, and she rushed off to find her husband.

That afternoon the *Darwin* sailed, and as Starbuck, from the bridge, watched the sun sink into the sea, his heart bounded in his breast, for he knew that before another night he would again hold in his arms the woman he loved.

Half the night Starbuck remained on deck, notwithstanding the protest of the doctor, alone under the stars, answering her call across the sea with the message of his devotion, sending it out to her in great pulsing waves of hope.

The daylight hours sped but slowly, and though the chief, answering the plea of Mrs. Storrs, worked an extra knot from the *Darwin's* engines, Starbuck found the pace of the ship a miserable crawl. At noon he himself took the sun, and worked out the steamer's position, comparing it with the captain's observation, and found that in two hours at the most, they should raise the island, — Starbuck Island, unnamed on any chart, shunned seemingly by all the world, but dearer to him for what it held than all the continents. Overruling the surgeon's commands, Starbuck swung himself into the foreshrouds and climbed aloft, peering to the northwest

through a pair of binoculars. For an hour he clung there, waiting, watching, going over again and again the results of his calculations, seeking for the not impossible mistake that might ruin his reckoning. Constantly he used his glass, sweeping the blue horizon with the closest scrutiny.

Steadily the *Darwin* plowed her way, swinging rhythmically to the heave of the long, smooth swells. All at once Starbuck's eye was arrested by the merest shadow on the edge of the world. It was so faint that he lost it the second time he looked, but at the third he saw it again, and knew that it was land. His heart leaped at the realization, and checking the sailor's cry of Land Ho! which rose involuntarily to his lips, he looked again, long and carefully, as if fearing a mirage. But it was true. An island was there and it must needs be his island.

As he held the glass to his eye, looking again to leave no room for doubt, visions assailed his mind, and a thousand fears crept into his heart, as possible dangers to which she might have been exposed, presented themselves in terrifying array. He told himself over and over again that she was safe, but over and over again doubt came in new and fanciful shapes, until his brain reeled with the torture of it.

But the calmness of the sea, the smiling tropic sky, the steady, purposeful progress of the ship, all

bespoke peace and serenity, and the spectre cleared as the landfall raised itself out of the blue, and took on at last the form of the one island, that, during the weeks he had been absent, had ever been the picture before his mind. And he watched, impatient for the completion of that last glimpse, by the addition of a line of white breakers, a strip of gleaming, sunlit sand and the figure of a girl in white, waving to him with a branch of jasmine blossoms.

But now he roused himself to his duty as look-out, and his shout of Land Ho! rang through the ship. There was a mild commotion below him, and one by one, the ship's company emerged to people the bridge and forward deck, talking quietly of the event at hand. And Starbuck, with the light of happiness shining in his eyes, descended to the bridge, ready when, after an eternity of waiting, the time should arrive to pilot the *Darwin* to a safe anchorage behind the reef.

CHAPTER XXI

BY THE WORDS OF MEN

DURING the first few days of her solitude, Eleanor Channing, still unrecovered from the shock of Starbuck's enforced departure, stayed closely by the home camp, rarely going farther than was necessary to procure food and fuel. Even her new born self-reliance and courage quailed in the long, dark hours when the trees whispered to her of mystery, and the night stirrings of the jungle at her back spoke the language of loneliness. The days she could bear, but long, long in the silent hours did she lie thinking of her lover, striving in her void of waking dreams to catch some vibrant thrill of hope from out of the silent space between them.

But as the days grew in number and the round of simple toil brought calmness and something like a return of normal spirits, she began to find a pleasurable excitement in little journeys of exploration. She traversed at first the length of beach on the side where they had made their home, her spear in hand and the axe slung in a pigskin case across her shoulders. She dug turtle eggs from the sand

to vary her bill of fare, and once, she ventured to the head of the valley. As she grew bolder, to occupy her thoughts and to pass the long hours, she climbed to the peak of the hill and replaced the streamer of white tappa, which was frayed and split with the constant worry of the breeze. On her way home from one of these excursions she noticed a bed of reddish earth, and hit upon the plan of dyeing, if possible, her signal flag, that it might show plainer from the sea. The experiment was successful, and on her next visit to the summit she flung a broad, crimson streamer to the wind.

Now she made almost daily a circuit of the island, scanning the seas as she went, often ascending the broad stream of frozen lava that ran from the silent crater to the shore. At such times she would sit on the peak's topmost pinnacle, under the flagstaff, and gaze for an hour at a time off toward the horizon where she had seen the schooner disappear, as if she expected to see it finally raise its white sails over the rim of the world of waters that danced before her, "blue-empty 'neath the sun." And she thought of Starbuck, of his love for her and his plans for their future. Would they ever come to pass? Would she some day go back to the world with him at her side, proud in his possession, to confront the sidelong glances of smug propriety with the free gaze of fearlessness? In what manner

would he come and what would be their path to civilization? She cared not so long as it lay side by side with his.

On her return to camp that day she stalked and slew a pig, which she dragged to the beach. Proud of her skill, she was a little doubtful when its dressing was attempted, but she recalled, as well as she could, the operation as she had seen Starbuck do it, and before long the hide was hanging on a bush and the meat was baking under the embers. Pleased with the success of her day, she retired, to sleep better than she had heretofore, and to dream of his presence, waking only with the first gray of dawn, to rise and hasten to the beach to learn if the sea at last held the speck in the distance that would mean his coming.

Of the possibility of some other ship's approach, she gave no thought. Rescue, to her, had one meaning and only one; the return of her mate. Other than that rescue was nothing. As she worked about the hut's door, using many of the little conveniences that Starbuck had fashioned for her, she thought steadily over her entire acquaintance with him; how he had come to her in a moment of stress and terror and sorrow, to lead her away from the dead form of her nearest and dearest, out into a life so new, so strange, so revolutionary that she even smiled as she went back beyond the beginning and

saw the Eleanor of old. She remembered little sacrifices that Starbuck had made for her from the very first; his long, sleepless vigil in the boat; his self-denial, even to the food and drink he needed, when the chance faced them that the supply might run short. She wondered at her attitude toward him then; her thought of him as a brute for his treatment of Aubert. She recalled his care and consideration; all his evident planning for her comfort and her needs, and she wondered in her woman's heart, if, when this adventure was only a memory, she would ever turn and look back on it as she was looking now into the past, and if she would smile to herself, happily, and hug the memory closer, as a sacred thing.

Would she ever slip back, she wondered, into the old narrow course of former environment, taking him with her, until they should gaze down the years, and smile at this seeming epoch, as merely the incident that had given them each other. She knew that life was not all freedom, and that the rut of living wears itself deep, but that the great lesson she had learned and he had learned from their isolation would always remain, she could not doubt. Whatever course their two lives should run, the love, and trust, and happiness of this one year would be ever in their hearts. For her the outlook on the world would be broader and kindlier, all-embracing in its

sympathy, condoning in its depth, pitying in its clarity of vision.

And for him she did not fear. Her confidence in his love was enough. Comparison with other men was not for him. He stood out a figure of courage and manhood beside which those she had known bulked small and incomplete. She was quite content, for never once did she lose her faith in his return.

So the days came and went, monotonous in their unvarying round, even vaguely grateful in their monotony. She had been for more than three long weeks alone, praying by night and by day that the next sun would bring her lover, when one cloudless morning she started to make again the circuit of the island. She stepped from her plunge in the cool waters of the stream with a sense of vigour in her limbs. Perfect health glowed in her eyes, and the rosy freshness of her skin was that of glorious youth. She donned her tunic of white, shook out to dry in the morning sun the heavy, shining lengths of her hair, and spear in hand, strode with free, brown limbs along the sand. There was lightness in her step and almost joy in her heart at the very brightness of the day and the thrill of life within her.

Reaching the westernmost point of the island, she turned and looked far out into the blue waste before her, shading her eyes with her hand; but the

horizon was empty as ever, and she kept on her way. Rounding to the long stretch of the southern shore she could see the length of the island, walled by the great tongue of lava that ran down into the sea. This reached, she sat and watched the smothering surf on the distant reef, her spear within easy grasp, listening for any sound that should indicate the presence of a herd of swine.

Long before, Starbuck had supplanted the rubbing stick with steel and tinder, and with these, which she carried in a tortoise shell box slung around her neck, she now started a blaze. At a little distance she found a nest of turtle eggs, and brought a calabash bowl, which she took from its hiding-place in a crevice in the rocks, for she often planned to take her luncheon there. With red-hot stones, dropped one by one into the bowl, she soon had the water boiling and her eggs cooked, and taking them, together with her water bottle of calabash gourd, cunningly shaped by binding the young stem, she began to climb the slope, stopping now and then to rest and to sweep the sea with her gaze. At the crater's rim she paused, marvelling long at the beauty of the view before her. The white line of the reef with its tossing spray, the ever changing blue and green and violet of the shallow lagoon, the waving, feathery tops of the tall palms, tracing their delicate fronds far below her, made a scene that she had grown to

love, even though the memories it often brought, darkened its colouring with the shadow of her solitude.

At length she rose, and crossing the crater, climbed the pinnacle to the signal staff. As she mounted to the height of the land there came to her a thrill of expectancy, and she hurried in her scramble to where she could look over the jutting point of lava to the great spread of ocean beyond.

As her eyes sought the sea her heart gave a great bound, and she brushed the hair from her brow with a quick movement of her arm, for there, in the distance, under a long black trail of smoke, was the gray hull of a steamer, heading for the island. With her naked eye she could see plainly the white weather cloth of the bridge, and moving figures crossing the black background of the funnel. She gave a little cry as the astounding vision of her longing came into being before her, and caught with one hand at the flag-pole, the other pressed against her heart. Could it be that he had come at last? It must be he. Who else of all the world could have sought her?

She could see now that the steamer was making directly for the break in the reef, and as she looked the Stars and Stripes broke out in a wee patch of colour at main gaff end. With shaking hands she knotted up her loose hair, and with limbs that

scarcely bore her for their trembling, she sought the path that led down the steep slope. Panting in her eagerness, she hurried, unmindful of the sharp stones that bruised her feet or the brambles that caught and tore at her tunic and her half-bared limbs. Half-way down she heard a rattle and crash, as the chain cable tore through the hawse pipes and the ship came to anchor.

In a very frenzy of anxiety to reach the beach before a boat could come ashore, she rushed madly on, tripping over roots and falling more than once. She had cast aside her spear and axe as useless burdens, and reaching the floor of the valley, hastened onward through the beaten path. Now she could see the lagoon through the trees, and for a flashing instant the thought came to her that it might not be he at all, but some stranger she was hurrying to greet. The tears came, her lip trembled, and she half fell against a tree trunk, her hands clasped as if in prayer against such a fortune. But, as her eyes cleared again, she heard a boat's keel scrape the sand and saw in a fleeting glimpse a single white figure that leaped ashore and ran across the beach. Now the man paused, stopped short as if listening.

"John!" she cried.

With a bound Starbuck was through the screen of branches and rushing toward her. With eyes

dim with the mist of gladness, she stood with arms outstretched, her head thrown back, her whole figure pulsing with unutterable joy.

"Eleanor!"

"John! John! my dear, my dear one! I knew you would come back to me."

For answer he spoke only her name, and as his love enfolded her in encircling arms, he kissed the sweet lips and the eyes that looked up through their beaming tears of joy, deep and fathomless with the perfect trust of love.

And as the sunset tipped the pinnacles of the height with crimson and gold, John Starbuck and Eleanor Channing stepped out upon a flag-hung quarter-deck, where the gray-haired captain stood waiting, with book in hand, and as the crew of the *Darwin* stood clustering and uncovered, the words of man sanctioned and set the seal of the world on the sacred union, already consecrated beyond man's power to revoke, under the skies of Starbuck Island.

THE END.

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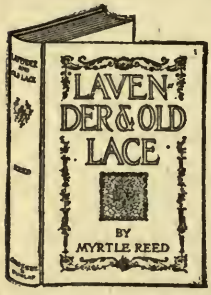

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